The Red Moon
The Interconnections between Theater and History,
the Black and Native Americanization Program
at Hampton Institute

The Redvolution has come
It has begun
It is Redvolution of the spirit and of the mind
It is freeing of the oppression, which has bound us for centuries
It is the realization that the chains which bind, which blind us
Are shackled to our spirits no longer
And they no longer blind our mind
Wake up and pray
Wake up and speak
Wake up and stand
Wake up and teach the children the truth
Oh
Never ever again sink into the prison of your alcohol, drugs, self-hatred,
denial or any of the other vices, which suffocate your spirit

Rise up and
Tear the cell walls down
And live, live, live,
Breath
Breath in
Speak the truth baby
(LITEFOOT [CHEROKEE/CHICHIMECCA])
The Red Moon (1908–1910) introduced audiences to African American and Native American solidarity. To understand the significance of such coalitions we must discuss the creative metamorphosis of the show. The team wrote two versions of The Red Moon; during the 1908 theatrical season they revised the production when the show toured the United States and Canada. In 1938 J. Rosamond Johnson wrote a new version of The Red Moon with the help of African American film actor Clarence Muse. The original production, written for an all-black cast, took place in Virginia with settings that included a black industrial institution called Swamptown, a Virginia farm, and a reservation in The Land of the Setting Sun. In the introduction to the 1938 edition, J. Rosamond Johnson wrote, “[t]he original story of The Red Moon dealt with life among the American Indians and Negroes in a southern community with an industrial school as background.” A review by J. D. Howard for The Indianapolis Freeman states, “The story of the play has to do with a romantic episode opening in and around a Government school for Indians and Negroes at ‘Sunshine Land’ (wherever that is). As it unfolds itself, the plot is well sustained throughout.” The 1938 production was written for a white cast with situations taking place in 1898 in Oklahoma and the South.

Many scholars describe the 1908 story of The Red Moon as revolving around Minnehaha (played by Abbie Mitchell), a half-African American and half-Native American woman who lives in Virginia with her African American mother, Lucretia Martin, “the old chief’s wife.” In a September 1908 review of the show, Lester Walton explains, “[t]he plot deals with a fight for a girl, who is the daughter of an Indian and a colored woman. While about three years old the Indian leaves wife and daughter and returns to his tribe where he is made chief.” J. Rosamond Johnson’s 1938 notes describe the 1908 production: Minnehaha “has just graduated from an industrial institution, and is kidnapped by her father, Chief Lowdog (Arthur Talbot), who misses her and takes her back to the reservation in the West.” Walton’s 1908 review states, “Fourteen years later the Indian [Chief Lowdog] returns the day the daughter is graduating from a Negro-Indian school, and she leaves with her father, amid much commotion.”

On the reservation, Minnehaha becomes the object of affection of Red Feather, “an educated Indian” played by Theodore Pankey. Walton relates, “[i]t is only a short time before the girl revolts at the Indian life she is compelled to lead and yearns for civilization.” Minnehaha’s African American boyfriend Plunk Green, “the lawyer they don’t expect,” played by J. Rosamond Johnson, and his friend Slim Brown, “the doctor that they don’t expect,” played by Bob Cole, set out to save her from her father, Red Feather,
and reservation life. Walton offered that, “Cole and Johnson do most of the comedy” as these characters.\textsuperscript{13}

At the end of the first act, Red Feather and Plunk Green vie for Minnehaha’s love through a co-rivalry. According to \textit{The Indianapolis Freeman} review for a performance at the Great Northern, “The battle for the love of Minnehaha began between Red Feather and Plunk Green. The curtain fell on the first act, a beautiful picture, Minnehaha leaving the Government school for the land of the ‘Setting Sun.’”\textsuperscript{14} Green and Brown ultimately save Minnehaha and also play a role in the reconciliation of Chief Lowdog and Lucretia Martin.\textsuperscript{15} In the finale Minnehaha marries Plunk Green as a reward for his bravery in returning her to her family and friends.\textsuperscript{16} Walton states that the musical was “unique in many respects” and that “The show ranks high musically, for picturesque scenes and costumes. It should be very successful.”\textsuperscript{17} Cole and Johnson aggrandized some of the African American and Native American characters through their names and their portrayal, while adhering to degrading representations for other roles. In the case of Minnehaha, they used a name that in Dakota means waterfall and is also the name of the heroine in Longfellow’s “The Song of Hiawatha.” Given Bob Cole’s Black Seminole background, it remains surprising that the team chose the name Chief Lowdog, a racially loaded moniker infused with jokes and preconceptions, which unabashedly and brashly announces negative personality traits.

\textbf{The Civil War and the Founding of the Black and Native American Program at Hampton}

To understand the historical and sociological implications of \textit{The Red Moon}, it remains necessary to discuss the historical epoch in which the team wrote the play. The Civil War proved an important training ground for new race relations and generated models for how the U.S. government would subsequently deal with African Americans and Native Americans through assimilationist programs. After the Civil War, the institutionalization of Radical Reconstruction provided the training grounds for the African American and Native American assimilation programs put into place. The plan included the appropriation of Native American land as the people faced imprisonment or relocation to reservations, and the founding of industrial institutions specifically designed to educate African Americans and Native Americans. White Civil War veterans Captain Richard Henry Pratt and General Samuel Chapman Armstrong gained experience during the Civil War and utilized their
“expertise” in schools for Native Americans and blacks, respectively, after the conflict.

Between 1868 and 1876, Radical Reconstruction enfranchised African Americans and impoverished whites in the South. Where African Americans’ experience in slavery left them destitute and uneducated, the condition of the poor white was that of a denigrated, uneducated serf. The redistribution of land, the founding of hospitals, and the creation of a school system for the newly freed slaves and poor whites ushered in a new era, one which offered African Americans the opportunity to gain political power as governors, legislators, and in other official capacities. The creation of banks by the Freedman’s Bureau for impecunious African Americans enabled wealth accumulation, which allowed them to leave behind poverty for a brief period. Emerging from servitude, slaves fostered a strong desire to better their conditions through education. One of the most important aspects of Reconstruction was the creation of a public school system, ultimately founded by former slaves, with the aid of the Freedman’s Bureau, New England teachers, and Northern philanthropy. This paved the way for the founding of schools such as Hampton Institute, Tuskegee Institute, Howard University, and Fisk University by the Freedman’s Bureau.\(^\text{18}\)

The founding of Hampton typifies the integral part the Union army played in the creation of African American organizations. Because of the presence of the Union army in Southern cities, new governmental institutions emerged, and Union officers such as General Samuel Chapman Armstrong became administrators. Armstrong was raised in Hawaii by missionary parents. In the 1830s he frequently traveled throughout the islands with his father, Richard Armstrong, the minister of public instruction for Hawaiian schools. General Armstrong drew his inspiration for Hampton from Lahainaluna Normal School, founded in 1831, and David B. Lyman’s Hilo Boarding and Manual Labor School, founded in 1836. Armstrong observed, “it meant something to the Hampton School, and perhaps to the ex slaves of America, that, from 1820 to 1860, the distinctly missionary period, there was worked out in the Hawaiian Islands, the problem of the emancipation, enfranchisement and Christian civilization of a dark-skinned Polynesian people in many respects like the Negro race.”\(^\text{19}\) Initially, in 1865, the placement of Captain C. B. Wilder of Boston as an abolitionist superintendent in charge of the Hampton area led to Radical Reconstruction through the redistributing of land to former slaves. Ultimately he faced dismissal and court-martial for following the congressional act, which created the Freedman’s Bureau, and the Circular Order Thirteen of July 28, 1865, which directed him to redistribute the abandoned lands to escaped slaves. President Johnson’s conservative recon-
struction plan, which favored the planter class, led to Wilder’s dismissal. The stronghold of the Union army in Hampton and the surrounding area provided a safe harbor for legions of escaped slaves, who by 1862 enjoyed “quasi-freedom.” African Americans joined the Union army; cultivated the abandoned farmlands; made alliances with the Northern missionaries; and, according to Robert Engs, defined their freedom as enjoying “all the privileges given free white people in America.”

An opponent of Radical Reconstruction, General Samuel Armstrong replaced Wilder and supported the return of Union confiscated lands to former Confederates and the unfair labor contracts negotiated between former slave owners and “free” black workers, but opposed the extension of the franchise to African American males. Armstrong viewed African Americans as an underclass that should be educated primarily as manual laborers and servants to meet the labor need of the white Southern landowners. Hampton Institute was opened in 1868 to provide manual training and literacy skills for the formerly enslaved African Americans, and the school received substantial support from the American Missionary Association, the Union army, and northern philanthropic foundations such as the Slater Fund. The utter absurdity of “educating” blacks in the very skills they had already received training in due to their enslavement seemed lost on Armstrong, his supporters, and white supremacists. Cole and Johnson set The Red Moon in a Hampton-like school—Swamptown.

The displacement of Native Americans onto reservations due to westward expansion left the U.S. government with the dilemma of what to do with these indigenous survivors. After the Red River War of 1874, the government imprisoned Native Americans whom they deemed to have committed crimes during the war and sent them to reservations. In 1875 the government placed white Civil War veteran Captain Richard Henry Pratt in charge of these prisoners. After serving four years in the Civil War as a corporal, Pratt became a lieutenant in 1867, and a captain in 1873. He served at Fort Arbuckle, Indian Territory, where he commanded the Tenth Regiment, one of the first all-black regiments, founded in 1866 and consisting of newly freed slaves from Little Rock, Arkansas; Native American scouts from the Tonkawa, Osage, Choctaw, and Cherokee tribes; and white officers. Pratt’s experiences with the Tenth Regiment and in the Civil War became the foundation for how he would govern the Native Americans at Hampton.

The imprisonment of Native Americans under Pratt’s command at Fort Marion, Florida, in the 1870s began attempts to Americanize Indians through education. In 1875, Captain Pratt controlled Native Americans imprisoned at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, whose legions included Kiowas, Comanche, Chey-
enne, and Arapahos. The eventual transfers of seventy-four Native American prisoners to St. Augustine, Florida, under Pratt’s command, culminated in Pratt “humanely” removing their shackles and permitting them to police themselves. Part of his project in Florida included teaching them English with the help of missionary teacher, Sarah Mather; indoctrinating them in the idea of “working for wages” in orange groves and packinghouses; encouraging their artistic talents as ledger artists; and assimilating them into European culture. Wealthy northerners wintering at Fort Marion interested in Pratt’s project taught them reading, writing, and arithmetic, while the students taught the northerners how to use the bow and arrow. Native American reform advocates such as Episcopal Bishop Henry Whipple, Senator George Pendleton, and Spencer Baird of the Smithsonian Institute wintering at Fort Marion encouraged Pratt in his work with the Indians.  

Buoyed by his success, Pratt wrote to the Interior and War Departments in 1878 to propose the education of Native Americans at Hampton Institute in Virginia, after a white school rejected them. Armstrong and the Hampton administrators ultimately accepted the proposal. In 1878, twenty-two Fort Marion prisoners gained admission to Hampton Institute, and Congress agreed to the education of additional Indians at the school. Pratt arranged to transport six students to Hampton, followed by sixty-two others. The government designed the Native American boarding school system to distance the student from their culture and instill in them the U.S. ideologies of citizenship and civilization. The government adoption of the boarding schools system for Native Americans would eventually lead to the founding of Flandreau (South Dakota), Carlisle (Pennsylvania), Haskell (Kansas), and to the Compulsory Attendance Law of 1891, which forced Indian children to attend government boarding schools modeled after Hampton Institute.  

Pratt chose a select group of students to attend Hampton; as he recalled, “side by side with those colored pupils the Indian boys and girls, in perfect harmony with the new life demonstrated their capacity to hold their own in improving the best chances.” In a 1878 letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington D.C., Pratt claimed that the Indian prisoners stayed at Hampton by their “own choosing, as even down to the last moment they were offered the privilege of backing down and going home with the others.” School administrators assigned the Indian students a black roommate, who taught by example. African Americans remained somewhat reluctant roommates at first because of the perception that Indians were violent. Armstrong assuaged their fears and black students volunteered.  

Captain Pratt and General Armstrong worked together to make a smooth transition from an all-black coeducational institution to a biracial institution,
The red Moon

despite their differing positions on biracial education. According to Robert Francis Engs, the partnership was brief because “Pratt was a firm believer in the Indian’s equality with the white man, and he objected to their education among ‘inferior’ Negroes.” Initially Pratt favored biracial education, though Armstrong opposed it, proposing the education of Native Americans and African Americans in separate campus sites. He feared intimacy between them and worried that they might unite against whites in insurrection and violence. Yet the fear of Native American violence against whites proved unfounded after their defeat in war on the plains against whites and their ultimate subjugation as prisoners at Fort Marion. Despite their tractability, Armstrong hired a jailer for the Native Americans to quell the fears of Hampton administrators and the Virginians in the surrounding areas. Lieutenant Henry Romeyn, a soldier from the Indian territories, acted as the commandant of the school, and Fortress Monroe remained at the disposal of Armstrong in case the Indians rebelled.

Cole and Johnson interpreted biracial education through African American/Native American Minnehaha and Native American Red Feather, students educated at Swamptown, which resembled Hampton. The connections between the Americanization program at Hampton Institute, Booker T. Washington’s involvement with the program, and Cole and Johnson’s The Red Moon enables us to see the connections between what happened off stage and what happened on stage. The team’s devotion to Washington influenced their musical about the Indian and African American interaction at Hampton Institute. Before founding Tuskegee Institute, Washington held the position of “House Father” to Native American male students at Hampton in 1880. Washington’s job as the housefather included living with the students “and hav[ing] the charge of their discipline, clothing, rooms, and so on.” Washington replaced James C. Robbins, an 1876 Hampton graduate who held the position from 1876–1880. While Robbins enjoyed his job, he resigned in 1880 because Armstrong undermined his authority by refusing to give him maximum control over the Indians. Washington’s position as their teacher held particular importance, and the success or failure of the project lay firmly in his hands. Armstrong heralded Washington as the primary force in the education of Native Americans.

Could the black and red races be educated together without too much friction? I selected Mr. Washington as housefather of the Indian boys . . . he settled the whole question most satisfactorily, and, chiefly through his wise initiative, we have for nearly fourteen years educated the two races together.
Armstrong conveniently omits James C. Robbins’s contributions to the program. Washington’s social welfare and educational agenda included helping and uplifting Indians. In 1905 he traveled to Arkansas, Indian Territory, and Oklahoma to “to see something of the condition of the colored people in the Indian Territory who were classed as Indians, or who were at one time slaves of the Indians.” Washington’s advocacy work for Native Americans remains noteworthy and most certainly was sparked by his experience teaching Native Americans.

Booker T. Washington believed that interracial cooperation held the key to the success and uplift of Native Americans at Hampton Institute and in the United States. He argued that they must conform to the proven educational program set in place for blacks. Washington initially questioned his ability to teach Native Americans because of what he described as the Indians’ feelings of superiority to whites and their higher sense of superiority to blacks due to African submission to slavery. He felt Native Americans would never submit to slavery. Washington found that his trepidation proved unfounded, as he recalled: “[i]t was not long before I had the complete confidence of the Indians, and not only this, but I think I am safe in saying that I had their love and respect. I found that they were about like any other human beings; that they responded to kind treatment and resented ill treatment. They were continually planning to do something that would add to my happiness and comfort.”

**African American Female Teachers at Hampton**

African American female students and teachers at Hampton found themselves placed in charge of Native American female students. Amelia Perry, an 1879 graduate, supervised the Indian girls in 1876. Lovey Mayo, who graduated in 1880, spent five years managing the Indian girls at Winona, the Indian girls dormitory. Mayo ran the laundry and later became the matron of the dorm. Georgia (Georgiana) Washington, who graduated in 1882, held the position of matron and ran the Winona laundry for ten years. In the summer of 1882, Olivia Davidson, Washington’s future wife, trained Indian girls at Hampton in preparation for her fall teaching position at Tuskegee Institute (figures 15 and 16).

Teaching Native American students and employing African American women to teach them provided the foundation for Booker T. Washington’s teaching methods at Tuskegee Institute, where he involved women in training and education. This proved exceptional given African American women’s
Figure 15. Amelia Perry Pride graduated from Hampton in 1879. She supervised the Indians in 1876. Amelia Perry Pride Papers. Hampton University Archives, Hampton, Virginia. Courtesy of Hampton University Archives

exclusion from higher education, social science, and academic inquiry by colleges, universities, and by people like W. E. B. Du Bois. White foundations and religious institutions also challenged progressive education for blacks and attempted to control black schools.\textsuperscript{41} In \textit{A Voice From the South} (1892), Anna Julia Cooper lamented the lack of educational opportunities for black women. She detailed her experience as a student, pointed to the inferior education that black women received compared to black men due to the expectation that women would marry and mother, and she underscored the importance of black women’s educational development as integral to ennobling the race.\textsuperscript{42} Cooper says “[l]et there be the same flourish of trumpets and clapping of hands as when a boy announces his determination to enter the lists.”\textsuperscript{43} She argued that schools should raise money for black female education and offer these applicants scholarships as readily as they gave them to male students. Given these many obstacles, Washington’s educational institution proved revolutionary in its inclusion of African American women, and his commitment to Native American education also remains noteworthy.

Hampton officials’ resistance to biracial education and fear of romance between African Americans and Native Americans originated in the racial hierarchies established at the founding of the institute. These included a romance hierarchy and an education hierarchy, both of which benefited the white administration and teachers at the school. The romance hierarchy set in place by the officials prohibited romance and marriage between blacks and Native Americans, while encouraging romance and wedlock between white teachers and administrators and Native American students. The education hierarchy placed whites as administrators and teachers of preferred courses at the top, blacks as teachers of industrial classes and courses the whites refused to teach in the middle, and Native Americans at the bottom. In addition, one can surmise that to ensure that alliances would not occur between African Americans and Native Americans, white administrators instituted a system in which they used African Americans to physically discipline Native Americans, further complicating race relations.

General Armstrong and the board sat at the top of the racial hierarchy with the white female teachers by their side. Thus an involuted and deliberately divisive racial hierarchy permeated Hampton Institute. The arrival of the Native Americans further snarled the school’s racial politics. As citizens, African Americans occupied a higher status than the noncitizen Native American prisoners of war. Whites ruled both groups, but sought to control and supervise African Americans’ own supervision of Native Americans. This hierarchy attempted to pit Native Americans and African Americans
against each other and undermine the prospects for alliances between the two aggrieved communities of color. Within this racially charged environment African American female teachers and student teachers found common bonds and affinities with Native American students.

White female teachers such as Cora Folsom taught “Advanced Class,” “Civilization Class,” civics, and economics, while African American female students and teachers Amelia Perry, Lovey Mayo, Georgiana Washington, and Olivia Davidson found themselves relegated to caring for and teaching Indian girls domestic service and running the laundry at Winona. Lovey Mayo gave voice to the disappointment of being trained as a teacher and consigned to the art of domestic science: “Though I did not do much classroom teaching as I had hoped for, there were other points that needed attention, and the greater part of my time and strength went in that direction.”44 Lovey Mayo’s experience at Hampton illustrates the fact that her duties left little time for the teaching of elementary education, a duty that it appears Mayo longed for as is evident in her expression of disappointment and disillusionment. Georgiana Washington also taught the Native American girls and, like Mayo, also found that Hampton Institute did not meet her expectations.45 She recalled that “[h]aving just finished school I was full of the theory and practice of teaching, practice lived, but theory died a natural death.”46 Instead of teaching academic courses, Washington taught domestic science to the Native American girls. She stated: “I had two classes in laundry work in the morning and two in the afternoon, every day except Saturday. One class would wash while the other ironed, so the trial was first at the ironing table, then at the tub.”47 Washington’s words elucidate her disenchantment: “practice lived, but theory died a natural death.” Lovey Mayo, Georgiana Washington, and the Native American students assigned positions as domestic workers appeared to leave little room for any other aspirations at Hampton. Their experiences also reveal that the administration, with the aid of their white female teachers, blocked the ambitions of the African American female students and teachers because the education was specifically designed to keep them in a marginal position in U.S. society.

They learned sewing and mending, both by hand and machine, as well as washing, ironing, and gardening. The courses also included math, U.S. and English history, English, natural sciences, “moral science,” and civics. They worked the majority of the day “learning” domestic skills to support the school and went to classes at night. Hampton and Indian boarding schools reaped enormous financial rewards from this arrangement because the students produced food, made goods for sale, and maintained the campus, and the male students even built campus structures. These schools could not oper-
ate without the labor of their students. Many Native American children faced illness and malnourishment, which in numerous cases led to death. They also suffered from incredible bouts of homesickness, which compelled some of them to run away from the boarding schools. The African American female teachers who taught the Native American students at Hampton found that they, too, faced exploitation. Not surprisingly, students at Hampton, Tuskegee, and their Native American government boarding school counterparts two decades later expressed their dissatisfaction and disappointment with their collective educational experience.

Learning and practicing domestic skills proved difficult and dangerous for the girls because the equipment was heavy and cumbersome. In *My Face Is Black Is True: Callie House and the Struggle for Ex- Slave Reparations* (2005), Mary Frances Berry describes what black female domestic laborers experienced. Berry states that washerwomen often made soap from pork grease, used washboards to scrub clothes, made starch by boiling flour, and heated heavy irons on stoves. Domestic work proved both physically challenging and damaging to the body. They ran heavy irons in a continuous pattern back and forth, and “[t]he women’s hands were reddened from the harshness of the soap, and they worked with constant pain from bending over to stir the wash kettles and from lifting soaked, wet, heavy bedding.” Due to their work as laundresses at Hampton Institute, African American teachers Amelia Perry Pride, Georgiana Washington, and Lovey Mayo’s experiences paralleled those of washerwomen. The Native American girls’ training in domestic skills also proved harsh and dangerous and certainly secured their position in life as domestic laborers.

Amelia Perry Pride taught the girls how to iron and wrote that they expressed their fear of the hot irons. Pride recalled that, “One [girl] took an iron off to carry it to the tables[,] she did not hold it out away from herself, so it scorched a great place in her dress.” Later that day Pride observed: “I found she had got tired of pushing the heavy iron about, so she had just set it down for a few moments here and there on the towel, and of course wherever it had rested it had left a yellow print of itself.” Pride’s observations demonstrate that the threat of injury and fatigue was high for the teachers and their young students. This type of “education” would manifest itself in the Native American government boarding schools in what David Wallace Adams describes as “never ending drudgery” for the students. Anna Shaw, a student in Phoenix, Arizona, faced “strapping” if she wasn’t finished scrubbing the dining room floors by 8:00 A.M. Rebecca Mazakute/Rattling Iron, Lakota (Sioux) wrote about her experience at Hampton in December 1882.
[We] sweep our Halls and steps before we make our beds, and when we’re finished with that we clean our own rooms, some of us got teachers rooms, [sic] So we clean our own rooms before we do the teachers, because they get up later than we do. . . . Right after that I go to school and in [the] afternoon we have sewing at 1 o’clock and stop it at 4 o’clock, after 4 we have study hour. 55

As with her teachers, little time was allotted for learning academics. Both African American teachers and Native American students at Hampton and their boarding school counterparts all paid a high price for their “education”: demoralization, injury, and torturous labor.

All students “trained” in the summer in “outing programs,” where they worked for whites as servants and laborers. Booker T. Washington recalled that the girl students “left to spend their vacation north as helpers in strange families.” 56 They traveled to New England to continue their domestic education by working for white families. While many of the African American and Native American students attended Hampton Institute due in part to northern philanthropy, the system of sending students out in the summer to train as laborers in northerners’ homes remains specious, for the work proved arduous and many students became ill, grew homesick, and died.

Some students attempted to negotiate a return to Hampton. Sarah Walker (Hidasta) wrote to a female benefactor from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1880 that “I want to go back to Hampton and go to school. I am not homesick now. I have very nice time over here. I want to see you all very much.” 57 With her assurance that she is not homesick, Walker tries to broker a deal to return home and reveals that she is in fact very much homesick. She continues her letter by stating, “Carrie and I we go to church every Sunday and also to Sunday school. I wash the dishes every day and sweep the kitchen and do my washing and ironing. Mrs. Foot, give me a nice dress. Your friend “Sarah Walker.” 58 Part of the strategy at Hampton Institute included forcing the Native American students to conform to white ideals and expunge their Indian culture and heritage. It appears that Walker attempted to use the oppressors’ tools against them in her negotiations to return home by relaying that her assimilation into white culture was complete. She assured the reader that she conformed to Christianity and accepted domestic labor as her lot and this was why she should be allowed to return home. Other students completely rejected white man’s “civilization” and brokered their deals in more profound and heartbreaking ways. White teacher Cora Folsom relayed the following situation.
Chapter Four

One girl with the striking misnomer of Happy Road, homesick beyond all reason, would lie prone upon the ground [and could not be] forced from it, and though she scorned not the relief of tears, had to [be] sent home after a few months as hopeless.\textsuperscript{59}

By showing her inconsolable despair at being taken away from her family, Happy Road successfully rejected white man’s civilization and negotiated her return home.

Other Indian girl students spent their summers at Hampton as “assistant cooks,” dining room workers, and waitresses. Booker T. Washington asserted that they “are learning rapidly the many little things necessary to good house keeping.”\textsuperscript{60} The very young students also stayed behind at Hampton Institute under the charge of black teachers such as Georgiana Washington. As with their teachers, little time was allotted for learning academics.\textsuperscript{61}

Even when faced with the harsh reality of the “education” at Hampton, the African American teachers held high ideals and hope for a bright future for both groups. Lovey Mayo asserted that

The Indian race as well as my own, is struggling for recognition as men and though the former has greater encouragements, I considered it a privilege to have contributed even in a small way, toward the accomplishments of the desired end.\textsuperscript{62}

In \textit{The Red Moon}, Cole and Johnson’s female characters, thankfully, escaped all the degrading and humiliating experiences of the African American and Native American teachers and students at Hampton Institute. Where their real-life experiences offered them a life of domestic service, the play emphasized the importance of a standard education. The show presented audiences with Minnehaha, an African American and Native American woman, attending “Swamptown Institute” for higher education.

Part of the Americanization program at Hampton Institute including donning white’s clothing—“citizens’ dress.” The education emphasized the importance of European clothing and religion, but this is not to say that the Native Americans or the African Americans fully accepted assimilation or that it did not cause humiliation and pain. In a not so thinly veiled criticism of the white man’s civilization, Booker T. Washington informs us of the emotionally damaging effects of discarding one’s culture.

This thing they [Native Americans] disliked most, I think were to have their long hair cut, to give up wearing their blankets, and to cease smoking; but
no white American ever thinks that any other race is wholly civilized until he wears the white man's clothes, eats the white man's foods, speaks the white man's language, and professes the white man's religion.  

Washington reveals the arrogance and callousness of hegemony and the psychic effects of “civilizing” Native Americans and other racialized groups. Margaret James Murray’s (Mrs. Booker T. Washington) “Practical Leaflet” addressed African American female resistance to relinquishing their headcarves, a seemingly embarrassing reminder of Africa or African American enslavement. Consequently African American and Native American indoctrination into white man’s civilization included the purging of anything that remotely resembled indigenous culture. Ohet.toint and Toun ke uh, former Fort Marion prisoners, wrote Pratt and discussed their new skills. On July 1878 Ohet.toint wrote, “I am White man now and is not Indian and I think I talk English very soon now because I don’t want the Indian clothes now and I like White man clothe very much.” On August 23, 1878, Toun ke uh wrote: “But you I want my letter when I come in Hampton so was like I of the white men clothes it to wear and I am very well not sick and I have plenty to eat and good clothes and all I love the white people friend.” It remains unclear whether these letters reveal their acceptance of hegemony at Hampton or provide evidence of a strategy of survival for the Indian students. What is clear was the expectation that Native Americans would expunge all remnants of their past and live as “whites.” All the students were compelled to wear “citizens’ dress.”

Despite the obstacles that they faced, the African American female teachers saw their work with the Indian girls and their education as affirming, and they worked to draw alliances between the two groups. Brenda Child argues that Native American boarding schools, such as Flandreau and Haskell, forbade students to speak their tribal language, with severe punishments, including beatings, jailing, and having one’s mouth washed with soap. One of the school requirements included “cast[ing] off their Indian name” as a mark of civility. Teachers and administrators coupled this with public humiliation if students used their Native American names, as they were taught to be ashamed of their names and their language.

Hampton Institute’s method of Americanization appeared more humane. The school allowed the students to keep their Native American name as a last name, yet required the students to adopt an Anglo first name. The strategy of the African American teachers at Hampton proved quite dissimilar to the methods adopted by the Native American government boarding schools. The African American teachers formed relationships and trust with the Native
American students through language. Lovey Mayo, Georgiana Walker, and Amelia Perry Pride made an effort to learn the students’ languages, which certainly forged a bond between them. Taken from their parents for education in Virginia at a young age, many of the Native American female students cultivated warm and loving relationships with their African American female teachers, viewing them as surrogate parents, and they wrote of their mutual affection.

In lamenting Amelia Perry Pride’s planned departure from Hampton, Sarah Walker (Hidasta) from Fort Berthold, Dakota wrote on February 1880 in the Southern Workman, “I will remember you always. I want you to take care of us all the time. I don’t want any body but you. Will cry when you go to teach somebody else please come to see us again.” This plaintive expression of grief reveals the strong attachments and quasi-familial relationships that formed between teacher and student. The girls appeared to respect their black teachers and held them in high regard. The Native American student newspaper, Talks and Thoughts, noted in 1888, “Miss Georgiana Washington is back from her vacation, and her old friends are glad to see her.” White teacher Cora Folsom wrote that Lovey Mayo and Georgiana Washington “were much beloved by the Indian girls who have always held them in grateful remembrance.” Anna Dawson, who arrived at Hampton as a little girl, wrote from Framingham, Massachusetts on February 23, 1888: “Miss Lovey Mayo, a colored young lady, . . . was for some years employed in the Indian Department, and she received as much respect and love from the Indian girls as any white teacher we have, and we were all very sorry when she went away.”

While it appears that the Hampton administrators attempted to position the white female teachers as superior to the African American teachers, the Native American students rejected this hierarchy. They had fond feelings toward their African American teachers. In the face of the harsh educational environment and their conscription as domestic laborers, the students and their teachers found common ground, mutual admiration, and respect for each other at Hampton Institute. They also committed themselves to education as a means of enhancing the status of both groups.

While these women found the environment at Hampton Institute stifling to their intellectual and social growth, they found meaning for themselves through their work with the Native American female students. They discovered that in order to achieve their aspirations they had to leave Hampton Institute. Upon graduation in 1879 Amelia Perry Pride returned to her home town, Lynchburg, Virginia, where she founded the Polk School, a cooking and sewing school, the Dorchester Home for the Indigent and Aged, and a women’s club. Pride also held the position of officer in the Temperance
Society, demanded the termination of the jailing of African Americans, and argued for the end of Jim Crow on steamships and trains. Similarly Georgiana Washington left Hampton Institute after fifteen years teaching the Native American girls. Washington established a school in Alabama to “[lift] the cloud of ignorance and superstition from my brothers and sisters there,” and founded the Peoples Village School in Mount Meigs, Alabama, where she held the position of principal. Lovey Mayo left Hampton in 1885 to work at Tuskegee Institute, where she participated in missionary work and held the position of matron.

These women’s goals in life came to full fruition upon their departure from the school through their work in establishing self-help organizations to better the lives of African Americans less fortunate than themselves. Despite the prohibitions set in place at Hampton which limited their life opportunities, African American and Native American female students and teachers found meaning for themselves by forming alliances with one another at the school. Once they left Hampton, their chances for personal and intellectual growth became a reality. Comparably, Cole and Johnson fully realized the potential for fighting racism and hegemony in their reimagining of biracial education at Hampton as a setting in which alliance building and interethnic coalitions presented an avenue for the struggle against oppression.

Industrial education proved devastating to African American and Native American students at Hampton. The farming techniques they learned relied on unmechanized operations, low capitalization, and small-scale individualized labor, which proved out of date by the time the students finished their education. In 1882, 90 percent of the black students obtained jobs as teachers and married; three were ministers, and one was a doctor. In 1892 Native Americans went on to work in farming, or as blacksmiths, as wheelwrights, merchants, clerks, missionaries, teachers, and police officers. An infinitesimal percentage of Native American students received higher education and worked as doctors, engineers, surveyors, and lawyers. The majority of them finished the three-year program, and usually returned to the reservation having mastered only an elementary understanding of English, reading, writing, and math. Although African Americans held high hopes for their future because of their education at Hampton, the only professions they actually qualified for after their training were in domestic service and low-wage labor. The promise of small business ownership proved a promise un-kept. Debt peonage in the South, economic depression, racial discrimination, and training on outdated equipment made it nearly impossible for blacks and Native Americans to transcend their condition. Many who gained training in industrial education found themselves at a disadvantage.
Booker T. Washington and Georgiana Washington held high hopes for the black race and the educational opportunities afforded to them. Georgiana Washington wrote that “My aim is to help, in any way I can, both Indian and Negro,” and “[h]aving spent fifteen years at Hampton Institute ten as an assistant in the work for Indian girls, I count this experience the great privilege of my life.”

Booker T. Washington felt that uplift meant self-sufficiency by obtaining land or a business. This seemed to many people the best way for African Americans and Native Americans to advance themselves in white society. Unfortunately, white society had no intention of letting people of color rise.

The real historical events of biracial education at Hampton Institute acted as the foundation and framework for Cole and Johnson’s The Red Moon. Georgiana Washington felt that interracial unity held the key to dignifying African Americans and Native Americans. Her creed for this unity was “two people down can’t help each other, but two people rising can.” Correspondingly Cole and Johnson imagined interracial solidarity, mutual education, and romance between African Americans and Native Americans in The Red Moon. The musical illustrates this ideological stance. The musical offered Broadway audiences refined and erudite African American and Native American women. The team presented the audience with a chorus of cosmopolitan Gibson Girls and Ada Girls, possibly inspired by Ada Overton Walker—Marie Young, Pauline Hackney, Tootie Delk, Marie Lucas, Mattie Harris, and Millie Dean. They performed the song “Ada My Sweet Potato” with Cole’s Slim Brown. This image sharply opposed the lived experiences of the women who attended Hampton. Fanny Wise played Trusculina White, Slim Brown’s love interest. Wise performed “I’ve Lost My Teddy Bear,” which Lester Walton asserted “is going to be one of the hits of the show.” Ada Overton Walker “the public’s favorite,” played Phoebe Brown, sang the song of the same name with a chorus of “Spanish senoritas,” and choreographed and performed “a new Aboriginal dance,” the Native American-inspired “Wildfire.” Anna Cook Pankey played Nakomis, the Native American prophetess who sang the hauntingly beautiful slow rag “The Bleeding Moon,” with the lines “When the moon is bleeding, and the clouds are red / ’Tis an awful omen, Jossakeed has said. / Then the skies are crimson, in the month of June. / Oh! My people look not on the bleeding moon.” Bob Cole wrote the lyrics, which the team claimed interpreted a Native American omen, and J. Rosamond Johnson wrote the music. The Red Moon presented a situation considerably superior to that of domestic or laundry woman assigned to African American and Native American teachers and students at Hampton Institute.
It appears that this production provided audiences with the first rendering of African American and Native American alliances on Broadway, a stellar and unique accomplishment. The musical was based on actual historical events, but the interactions between African Americans and Native Americans within the production presented a far better situation than the historical record. They omitted the problematic whites from their vision of the industrial institution, and by this omission eliminated the racist ideology set in place at Hampton and replaced it with a vision of interracial coalitions. The reality at Hampton painted a far different picture.

African Americans and Native Americans remained segregated from one another at Hampton both academically and socially. Their living facilities, school and church attendance, eating arrangements, military training, and academics all remained separate, except for a few classes. One teacher, Elaine Goodale Eastman, stated that the administration imposed segregation to prevent romantic pairings and fights. Administrators favored cordial relationships between African Americans and Native Americans imbued with chaste, nonintimate behavior. Eastman asserted that the initial reason for racially separating students occurred because the Native American students spoke little, if any, English. In later years, when they came from the reservations already speaking English, they participated in integrated classes. Yet the supporters and “friends” of Indians feared that they would be “contaminated” by associating with the black community and students. Helen Ludlow maintained that administrators kept the interactions between the groups “limited and guarded” to maintain racial purity and personal virtue. These codes of racial purity and morals of conduct did not extend to whites who taught at the institution, as evidenced by the number of marriages that took place between whites and Native Americans. Whites wanted to keep blacks and Native Americans divided through the racial hierarchy created at Hampton because they believed in Native American assimilation into white culture, while they believed that black assimilation would and should never occur.

Industrial education for Native Americans would not last. General Armstrong foretold its demise in 1885. “The entire course includes, or more correctly begins and ends with the essentials of a good English education. Nothing more is attempted, because experience has shown us that nothing more is needed to fit our students for the work which is before them.” The commitment by the government to Native American education remained suspect given that they paid for only three years, although the program was designed for five years. According to Armstrong in 1885, Hampton remained “obliged to look to private charity” for the remainder of the school fee. Helen Ludlow reported in 1888 that charity supported
the yearly full-time attendance of only fifteen Indian students. By 1900, strong opposition to educating Native Americans began to chip away at the foundation of Indian education. In 1901, the Bureau of Indian Affairs abandoned academic training for Native Americans in favor of vocational and manual labor training. Brenda Childs points out that advocates of Indian education came to doubt full Native American assimilation, so they lowered the educational standards. In his annual report, as the commissioner of Indian Affairs, William Jones detailed other reasons for its demise, including that after thirty-three years it cost the public $240 million dollars, the education remained antiquated, and Native Americans remained dependent on the government, given their lives on reservations. The government expected boarding school-educated students to single-handedly “civilize” all who lived on the reservation, which proved an impossible task. Additionally, those educated at Indian boarding schools faced open hostility, racism, and discrimination in a job market where they could not find work in their respective fields.

The Romance Hierarchy at Hampton

The real experiences at Hampton proved harsh because hegemony prevented the proper education of African American and Native American people. In their musical, however, Cole and Johnson imagined an improved situation. They pictured black and Native American education as affirmative and saw industrial education as useful, and as something that would raise their social standing. Cole and Johnson produced their own form of racial counter lumping together of racial groups, humanizing blacks and Native Americans alike. They drew characters that needed no white supervision, but who decided their own future and welfare. By presenting blacks and Native Americans as more civilized than whites, more respectful and more beautiful, Cole and Johnson placed on stage the antithesis of the hegemonic plan for them. By inverting white domination and expunging whiteness, Cole and Johnson in effect transcended the degradation that white hegemony placed on black and Indian identity.

Cole and Johnson’s staged version of life at Hampton differed sharply from the historical model on which it was based. The Red Moon featured a serious romantic scene between J. Rosamond Johnson as African American Plunk Green and Abbie Mitchell, an African American singer, as the Indian/black Minnehaha “who has allowed herself to be loved” by him, giving theatergoers interracial romance. The following review of The Red Moon
confirms the passionate storyline. “This season Mr. Johnson developed into what you might call a romantic actor with a slight touch of tragic in places” as he plays “a very love-sick doctor.” This review elucidates the amorous underpinnings of the scenes between Johnson and Mitchell and illuminates the earnestness of the musical, ultimately substantiating the argument that Cole and Johnson broke the love scene proscription. The production also featured romantic intrigue between Minnehaha and the educated, “bold, bad Indian student” Red Feather, played by Theodore Pankey, again offering audiences interracial romance between blacks and Native Americans. Through Minnehaha’s parents, Chief Lowdog and African American Lucretia Martin, the audience witnessed interracial romance and its outcome in the birth of Minnehaha.

A hierarchy existed that regulated who actually gained sexual access to other races. Magnus Morner and Ramon Gutierrez argue that an important part of conquest in Latin America entailed white males’ sexual access to women. Similarly, at Hampton Institute, conquest also took shape in terms of sexual access, which manifested itself in a romantic hierarchy. White supporters and “friends” of Indians wanted to keep Indians pure and feared that by associating with blacks, Indians faced “contamination.” The administrators frowned upon romances between African Americans and Native Americans, which culminated in dismissal of the offenders. However the fact that officials condoned the pairing of whites and Native Americans demonstrated that their codes of racial purity and morality did not extend to the white teachers and administrators at Hampton; eight white men and six white women married Native American students. A concerted effort on the part of the faculty worked to prohibit interracial romantic and sexual relations between blacks and Native Americans.

Helen Ludlow discussed her visit to the Yankton Reservation and detailed the “success” of the Native American assimilation program through outmarriage, that is, marriage outside one’s own race. She reported that one “Hampton’s star” married a white male industrial teacher for the government, “who has taken her to a pleasant home on another agency, where she is helping him teach her people.” While Hampton administrators encouraged intermarriage between whites and Native Americans, they firmly policed and disapproved of wedlock between blacks and Native Americans. In 1888, Ludlow stated that “general social intercourse between the races of opposite sexes is limited and guarded. Trouble might come of it. None ever has. The effort is to build up self respect and mutual respect and we believe that education of the mind and heart tends to individual morality and race purity.”

Pratt openly encouraged this hypocrisy. He publicly denounced the lynch-
ing of African Americans and dismissed the commonly held notion of blacks as morally corrupt; yet, when having to choose between defending the rights of Native Americans over blacks, he chose the Indian. Armstrong assured readers in *Ten Year’s Work*, that “no doubt some low talk and ideas have been brought in from the low life in the South and West; but in ten years not a serious fracas has occurred, not a single case of immorality, between the students of both races and of both sexes.” Regardless of the fear of contamination by blacks, the Hampton officials felt that blacks acted as models to Native Americans in terms of civilization, English, and labor. Hampton teacher Elaine Goodale married Charles Eastman (Sioux) in 1891. Rebecca Pond married former Hampton student George Owl (Cherokee) in 1919. Caroline Andrus was engaged to her student, William A. Jones (Sac and Fox tribesman), who, as a Harvard University student on an anthropological study in the Philippines, died in 1909 before they married.

Not all of the relationships between white and Indian ended harmoniously. Native American student Addie Stevens became pregnant in the late 1800s, while administrators expelled Louisa Bissell for getting pregnant by an unmarried white private, Charles Cappizoli, in the 1920s. Both faced the wrath of white teachers Cora Folsom and Caroline Andrus. Whites gained sexual and romantic access to people of color at Hampton; thus we must surmise that they also participated in sexual relations with the African American students, while hypocritically enjoining African American and Native Americans from pursuing romantic relations with one another.

Notwithstanding the ban, interracial romance occurred. The 1888 Hampton faculty notes and discipline files state that three black boys and Indian girls received disciplinary action against them for “midnight strolls.” W. T. Penn and Josephine McCarthy (Sioux), James Atkinson and Cora Rulo (Ponca), and Fletcher Ricks and Jennie Ampetu (Assiniboine) found themselves charged with triple dating “for the purpose and engagement in ‘criminal conduct.’” The punishment proved severe, as the school expelled Ricks, Penn, and Atkinson, and “sent away” Ampetu. Black students persecuted the informer black student Sydney Williams because students thought that the choice to date interracially was a private matter. In 1902 administrators thwarted James Garvin and Winona Keith’s (Sioux) relationship by confiscating, opening, and keeping his letters from Keith, to maintain the racial purity codes. Given that the black students knew of the dating practices of the white faculty members, perhaps they rejected the prohibition as hypocrisy on the part of the faculty. Not surprisingly, the racial hierarchies set in place by the white administrators affected the gender relations between the Indians and blacks and most assuredly affected their relations with whites.
According to the dean of women, Elizabeth Hyde, Indian women deemed black men more desirable than Indian men because of their “civilized” behavior. This tension among the races caused concern among the administrators. Perhaps Indian males felt hostility against black males and found that they must conform to tropes of civilization to compete with the black male at Hampton.104

Similarly, a prohibition against romance between Indian men and African American women existed at Hampton, but the two groups pursued each other, renouncing the interdiction. Indian boys and men showed interest in black women and girls at Hampton. The 1888–1889 discipline files state that James Paypay (Cheyenne) was expelled and sent back to Shellbanks for endeavoring to continue “improper” relations with a black girl.105 In 1879 Helen Ludlow wrote that Indian boys favored African American girls and that one Indian student requested six horses from his father to give to the father of his black fiancée. He promised that while he hunted buffalo his wife would work. If this arrangement failed after one year, he would “throw her away” and acquire another wife.106 In 1960 David Owl (Cherokee) insisted that while Indian women married black men, no Indian male married a black woman although “sexual interest between Indian men and black women was not unknown.”107 I contend that Owl’s observation mirrors the bias against African American women that he learned at Hampton, because the proscription that existed at the school did not completely work to prevent marriage between black women and Indian men. Eleanor Gilman, a Hampton staff member from 1910 until 1975, recalled that Nancy Coleman, who was Cherokee and black, attended Hampton from 1914 to 1922 and married black student Ernest Thornton. “Nancy was a friend with whom Miss Gilman kept in touch over the years; the Thornton’s moved to Brookfield, Massachusetts and reared a family of five.”108

The romantic racial hierarchies that existed at Hampton Institute replicated Armstrong and Pratt’s beliefs and reproduced the white Virginians’ ideologies pertaining to miscegenation. The foundation of Hampton’s race policy lay in local Virginians’ initial response and opposition to Native American and black education. They wanted to keep the races separate, because many a white Virginian claimed a noble birthright as a descendant of Pocahontas. Hampton Institute posed a very real menace to them. African blood despoiling the Native Americans at Hampton through romantic relationships threatened to ruin the majestic narrative of the real and imagined progeny of Pocahontas.109 As long as the Native American legacy remained a thing of the past, given the forced removal of the indigenous Virginians, the heirs and those who claimed kinship to Pocahontas could maintain their noble
narrative. With the return of the Native Americans to the area and the threat of the black, a stain threatened to be spilled on their regal status, befouling their racial purity and heritage. A solution was needed. Although officials at Hampton attempted to keep blacks and Native Americans separated, interracial marriages still occurred, and this contributed to the reclassification of Native Americans as black through Virginia’s Race Integrity Law in the 1920s. In *The Red Moon*, Cole and Johnson envisioned the amalgamation of the African American and Native American races as an uplift tool. They discarded the hierarchy established at Hampton and actually placed on stage the very forms of romance completely and utterly forbidden at the school, making a progressive political statement for their time: that African Americans and Native Americans could unite. By eliminating the white presence within the performance, by placing blacks and Native Americans on stage romantically, Cole and Johnson enacted the very thing that white hegemony most feared.

Charles D. Mars underscored the importance of the amorous scenes between blacks and Native Americans during performances of the show, writing: “Rosamond Johnson and Abbie Mitchell in the ‘Red Shawl’ song was the neatest yet that has been offered in the form of Indian lovemaking. It made many young lovers in the house wish they were Indians.” Mars’s analysis of the romantic scene remains interesting and unique for the time, given the proscription on African American performance of love scenes during the early part of the twentieth century. Because of the taboo, Mars’s statement that the scene “made young lovers in the house wish they were Indians” holds particular meaning and relevance. Mars declared that because of their passionate scenes, viewers experienced so much pleasure that everyone in the audience wanted to be that black and Indian couple.

James Weldon Johnson’s own love life illuminates how the team patterned theatrical representations after their personal experiences. Johnson’s correspondence to his wife illustrates that he fully experienced a serious love in a manner that countered the stereotypical perceptions of black romance as minstrelsy and comedy. He wrote the following letter, dated April 4, 1912 to his wife while serving as the American consul in Nicaragua.

So you miss your old son a little? It is not only hard but odd for us to be separated, because we’ve been so closely together for two years. Far more constantly together than most couples married for the same length of time, for we have practically spent twenty four hours a day together. I can’t describe how much I miss you. I go from the office to the other part of the
house, and it seems that I ought to find you. I wake up in the night, and it seems that you must be in your room. One thing, our separation makes me realize more vividly than ever how much I really love my little wife, and yet, I’m glad you are not here; for I can stand what hardships there are better, knowing you don’t suffer them, and it won’t be for long.112

This letter demonstrates the intensity of love and reverence that Johnson held for his wife, and demonstrates that African Americans engaged in romantic lives that communicated their humanity. Cole and Johnson expressed this type of romance and respect for women of color on the stage.

Claudia Tate argues that because whites denied slaves marriage rights, marriage proved incredibly important to the newly freed slaves, representing an emblematic civil right.113 In late-nineteenth-century African American literary fiction writers appropriated the marriage plot usually associated with white middle-class women for “emancipatory purposes.”114 Similarly, Cole and Johnson utilized the marriage trope throughout The Red Moon to delineate the humanity and respectability of African Americans and Native Americans. The song “The Big Red Shawl” reflects this appropriation.

In “The Big Red Shawl,” serious romance and courtship between a black man and Native American woman acts as the primary component within the lyrics. J. Rosamond Johnson’s Plunk Green describes a Native American man courting a Native American woman. In the song he refers to “a brave of the bold Pawnee,” who “[w]hen the wild rose bloomed, / he went eagle plumèd to the lodge of the rival band, / ’Neath the big moon red to the maid he said, / as he asked her for her hand.” In the song, Abbie Mitchell’s Minnehaha replies to the “brave’s” marriage proposal by singing: “’Tis de-creed, should a Cherokee give her heart and hand to a Pawnee man, Great wars would the war moon see, but my love is yours.”115 The lyrics mirror Minnehaha’s vision of herself as worthy of marriage and in an amorous relationship with a Native American/black man. The song also depicts intergroup marriage, allowed audiences to see the acceptability of romantic pairings between African Americans and Native Americans, promoted the marriage convention as a black citizenship right, and by this claimed citizenship rights for Native Americans.

The song details two very important forms of agency for African Americans and Native Americans. First, it reverses the stereotypes of black men and Native American men as wild, savage, or emasculated, and portrays them as heroic and romantic. By imagining the black and Native American male character as the lover and defender of the black/Native woman in such lines as “cause my love, it is warm and my big right arm will brace the black
wolf’s call,” the team expunges the love scene taboo as the characters symbolize their life experiences. Secondly, the song reflects their insistence that black and Native Americans exhibit romance and love in a humane manner, through the lyric “for my love is true and it’s all for you, so let me hold you, love! and fold you, Let me fold you in my big red shawl.” Through the male character who promises to protect her and keep her safe and warm, the lyric also portrays black and Native American women as feminized as opposed to common stereotypical renderings. “The Big Red Shawl” foretells the future of the characters because Plunk Green marries Minnehaha as a reward for saving her from the reservation. To the twenty-first-century viewer their marriage appears as patriarchal, but through the lens of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century African Americans this remained an emancipatory move, given the marriage prohibitions prescribed for African Americans during slavery. The marriage also exemplified the protection of African American and Native American womanhood, another hard sought-after liberatory right in light of the rampant rape, brutality, and carnage perpetrated on them at the hands of white racists and degenerates. Finally, the union contests hegemony by fully rejecting the interdiction on intermarriages between African Americans and Native Americans.

David Krasner posits that 1908 marked the nadir of race relations in the United States and that the perception of intermarriage among people of color as the “ultimate violation of the social order” permeated white thought. In a similar vein, Katherine Ellinghaus in her study of white female marriage to Native American men at Hampton Institute between 1878 and 1923 states that the prospect of producing additional people of color through the sexual contact of black and Native American proved abhorrent to whites and problematized the racial categories of the nineteenth century.

The fear of nonwhite intermarriage remained at the forefront of social scientific thought and permeated popular racial thought among whites during this time. In Alfred P. Shultz’s 1908 book, Race or Mongrel, he asserted that intermarriage among people of color led to deterioration, mongrelization, and physical and mental deficiency among their offspring. Shultz contended that race mixing marked the collapse of civilization, threatened United States white racial purity, and that “God made the White man, God made the black man, but the devil made the half-castes.” Krasner suggests that Cole and Johnson’s possible awareness of the arguments of the social scientists became an impetus for the creation of The Red Moon. Krasner surmises that by placing an educated black/Native American woman on the stage and by portraying African American and Native American romance, Cole and Johnson countered the claims of the social scientists.
Native American Authenticity and The Red Moon

The team also capitalized on Native American themes in their music as early as 1906 with “Big Indian Chief,” which they wrote for the University of Pennsylvania’s sixteenth annual Mask and Wig Club production. Thomas Riis suggests that Indian-themed music gained popularity in the 1900s, and that the team capitalized on the genre by writing The Red Moon. The show incorporated Indian motifs within the music. For example the “Bleeding Moon,” told the story of an Indian curse, “Life is a Game of Checkers” symbolized red and black admixtures, and “The Big Red Shawl” represented an Indian love song. According to Cole, he and the Johnsons decided to write the musical while performing with their vaudeville act in the “Far West.” Yet it appears they actually began writing the musical while performing in Shoo Fly Regiment. Bob Cole recalled that they wanted to integrate “traditional or folk elements from both African-American and Indian culture into a musical.”

J. Rosamond Johnson’s 1938 Red Moon production notes specified that “[t]he Indian characters in the sequence are carefully drawn from the authology of the Indians’ social life, and marked care has been taken to avoid the usual ‘motion picture Indian.’ Legends and ceremonial dances are authentic. And in these will be found the mental attitude of the Indian and not what some author would want him to be in order to satisfy the formula of his story” (emphasis in original). Johnson felt that the portrayal of Native Americans within the production provided an authentic representation and elevated their position in U. S. culture. In her play about Cole’s life, Carriebel Plummer wrote a scene in which Mrs. Kingston (Plummer) reminisces about her brother Buddy’s show The Red Moon “as one authentic American story of Indian folklore” “registered in Washington, D.C.” This scene suggests that Cole and Johnson endeavored to write a true interpretation of Native American life and culture. We can surmise that Cole, whose heritage included Black Seminole ancestry, drew on his own personal knowledge of Indian culture learned from his father for the production. The team performed on an Apache reservation, where they discussed music with their hosts and incorporated what they learned into the musical. I believe that their musical appeared as the first one of its kind to include Native American musical themes on Broadway and the first to portray African American and Native American characters on the Broadway stage. In 1913 the Sioux composer Zitkala-Sa’s (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), a successor of Cole and Johnson, wrote the Sun Dance opera with William F. Hanson. The opera integrated original
Native American music and culture in a story of a love triangle between a Winona and Ohiya, a Sioux woman and man, and “the evil Shoshone Sweet Singer.” Like *The Red Moon*, the *Sun Dance* endeavored to dignify Native American culture by presenting authentic indigenous traditions.

In *The Red Moon*, Cole and Johnson drew upon their understanding of the shared religious beliefs and moon lore that united blacks and Native Americans, particularly the Apaches. Clara Sue Kidwell and Daryl Cumber Dance contend that ethnoastronomy, cosmology, and moon lore remained integral to the religious beliefs of Native Americans and southern African Americans and played a vital role in their folklore, being used to explain the relationships between the elements and life. Kidwell states that Native Americans time ceremonies by the moon, sun, and stars, and that these elements remain central to their social organization, intellectual thought, sexual and social relations, initiation rights, and calendar systems. Southern African Americans, Mexicans, and indigenous people of the Rio Grande followed similar religious beliefs by abiding by the moon’s patterns to farm, cut hair and nails, and hold religious ceremonies. They all accompanied these practices with explanatory tales. Blacks from Georgia and Louisiana believed that the red moon, comets, and shooting stars were signs of trouble, famine, and war, while the Northeastern Seneca (Iroquois) believed in the danger of the meteor fire dragons that must face containment in the water because their embers would ignite the world. In the novel *Cane*, Jean Toomer captured the foreboding the red moon brings to African Americans in Georgia when the “blood-burning-moon” appears, foretelling death. Animals react woefully, the blacks sing “Red Nigger Moon, Sinner, Blood-burning-moon, Sinner,” as the red moon casts its ruby dark shadow over the clouds and the town. The Catawba tell of a malevolent woman who steals a mother’s infant. When the mother rescues him, the angels are so touched that they lower ropes and mother and son ascend to Heaven. Viewing this, the malevolent woman begs the angels to allow her into Heaven. They lower ropes, but as she climbs they cut them and she plunges headlong, transforming into a comet. Because the woman symbolizes evil, we can surmise that the comet also embodies these qualities. These narratives appear as shared portents between blacks and Native Americans, and they appear as folk beliefs that Cole and Johnson used to authenticate *The Red Moon* and to show the similarities between blacks and Native Americans.

Perhaps Bob Cole’s African American mother and Black Seminole father exposed him to Seminole folklore and shared stories about the elements or the Seminole story about the creation of the Spirit Way. According to Seminole lore Hisagita-imisi, “the Breathmaker blew his breath toward the
The red Moon

sky and created the Milky Way” as a pathway that leads the souls of good Indians to the City of the West, by way of the Big Dipper, a boat. The Seneca (Iroquois) and the Jicarella Apache also tell of the creation of the Big Dipper. The Seneca (Iroquois) tell the story of two boys’ attempt to catch a giant bear, who casts a net over them to avoid capture. The bear throws the net into the sky where the boys are transformed into the handle of the Big Dipper. The Southwest and Jicarella Apache also tell a Big Dipper tale.132 The Jicarilla Apache’s narrative of Holy Boy’s failed efforts to create the sun and the moon proceeds with Whirlwind telling him that White and Black Hactcin possess the sun and moon. Holy Boy goes to them and they teach him the ceremony of creating these celestial bodies. Holy Boy completes these rites and the sun and moon rise, illuminating the underworld.133 The Iroquois and the Apache might have shared these stories with Cole and Johnson when they visited their reservations. Cole and Johnson probably drew upon such folklore to give their musical a sense of cultural authenticity. Perhaps Cole adopted the red moon omen for the musical from stories he heard in childhood and incorporated the augury with tales concerning the elements he heard on the Apache and the Iroquois reservations. Ultimately, the team made use of these shared beliefs as a way of showing the kindred associations that existed between Native Americans and African Americans through their communal and collective memory.134

Although many groups of people, including African Americans and Europeans, believed in the prognostications of the red moon, I have found little evidence that points to this belief actually existing in Native American folklore. While Cole and Johnson, as well as Reid Badger, Allen Woll, Henry T. Sampson, and numerous other scholars contend that the team included the presaging of the red moon as a collective belief of African Americans and Apaches, the red moon omen may have been a pseudo-Indian belief. Cole and Johnson probably intertwined the mutual folk beliefs of the groups such as the comet and shooting star as foreboding signs and the African American belief of the red moon as an omen to create the drama within the musical.

Native People’s Response to The Red Moon

While performing The Red Moon in Montreal in March of 1909, Theodore Pankey and Arthur Talbott, who played Native Americans in the show, visited the reservation of the Iroquois tribe on the Caugnawago Reservation on the St. Lawrence River in Montreal as guests of Chief Mitchal Dial Bount. Several Iroquois attended the performance of The Red Moon in March of
The Iroquois nation appreciated these efforts to dignify stage representations of Indians and inducted J. Rosamond Johnson into the tribe as a “sub-chief” of the Iroquois Indian Reserve, Caughnawaga Province, Quebec, Canada (1921). Johnson’s induction into the tribe and the warm reception that the company received on the reservation indicate that the Iroquois approved of their portrayal of Native Americans; however, one must wonder how the Iroquois responded to the stereotypical Native American characters and the narrative that included escaping reservation life for “civilization.” Given the dire living conditions on reservations, and the stripping away of the traditions and way of life of Indians by the governments of Canada and the United States, I would surmise that the Iroquois might have appreciated the Red Feather storyline of revolting against reservation life and Swamp-town Institute. I would also like to suggest that given the possibility, the Iroquois might also have wanted to eschew reservation life. Like Minnehaha, they surely would have opted to escape the rez for “civilization,” Iroquois civilization. We must remember that Europeans created the reservation system to control and confine indigenous peoples. As the Native American rapper Litefoot aptly notes, “Sam and his Crew really take good care of my FAM, They only killed half of my tribe and stole our land.” The reservation system made it possible for Europeans to purloin Native Americans’ land as an invading force and rob them of their freedom. The reservation system worked to indoctrinate Native Americans into European culture through assimilation, which meant the abandoning of Indian religious practices for Christianity and the forsaking of traditional ways of life for “civilization.” The Native American artist L. Frank (Tongva) in her drawings likens the Spanish Mission system to German World War II concentration camps, with nooses, skulls, crossbones, guillotines, and a never-ending passageway into the mission that Native Americans could never escape. Litefoot also raps about the interconnections between the dismal conditions of reservation life and mortality. He argues that for many Native Americans the reservation represents death. “Sometimes you know I hear about my friends, my family, living on the rez, city to city, state to state, rez to rez, and they dying. If they ain’t dying in a physical way, they dying in a spiritual way, or something much more important is dying.” Litefoot raps that the reservation for many native peoples symbolizes death, a difficult existence, and governmental neglect: “Sometimes I wonder why millions go for aid overseas, while Indian hospitals can’t put band aids on scratched knees,” “Sometimes I wish that Osama Bin Laden hid out on my rez, So that the media would come visit, and give Indian issues some press.” With these types of insurmountable challenges to reservation life in the twenty-first century, it remains no sur-
prise that the Iroquois welcomed Cole and Johnson’s story concerning Minnehaha and Red Feather’s escape from the reservation in 1909, for if the rez remains dire in the twenty first century, conditions most assuredly were much worse in 1909. The messages within *The Red Moon* included the narrative that Native American and African American ways of life remained superior to Americanization. Cole and Johnson’s critique of the white man’s civilization as unworthy of emulation most certainly resonated for the Iroquois, with the African American and Native American characters’ full abnegation of “white man’s civilization” within the musical. The messages embedded within the play without a doubt carried great meaning for the Iroquois as the messages represented a form of resistance against reservation life and against assimilationist policies.

Clues as to why Cole and Johnson wrote *The Red Moon* when and as they did include their admiration for Booker T. Washington and his project of exalting African Americans and Native Americans, as well as Thomas Riis’s identification of the popularity of Native American themed music and musicals. Two additional reasons that have been covered in this text are that the play symbolized a form of protest against scientific racism and social scientists who excoriated intermarriage between people of color, and that the inspiration for the musical stemmed from the team’s visit to the West and an Apache Reservation. I argue that all these reasons acted as the framework for the creation of *The Red Moon*, but that Washington’s and W. E. B. Du Bois’s strategy of ennobling African Americans remained at the foundation for the creation of the project.

**Stereotypes, Reality, and The Red Moon**

For all its good intentions, *The Red Moon* still contained stereotypes. After his successful run in *Shoo Fly Regiment*, Andrew Tribble played Lily White, the Washer Woman in *The Red Moon*. Tribble’s female characterizations served primarily as a comedic representation and as a political and satirical commentary on gender. The *Indianapolis Freeman* on October 24, 1908, reported that Tribble was “well received on every entrance, but did not score heavy as usual, yet he worked hard. It must have been the song, for he certainly had the spot.” As shown in the previous chapter, as a performer of black musical theater and minstrelsy, Tribble’s female impersonations, which he created specifically for black audiences, were infused with insider jokes and proved groundbreaking.

One review of *The Red Moon* reveals that the “chorus was well trained
and young blood with plenty of speed. There never was [such] a collection of colored girls.” Like Margo Webb’s description of pickaninny dancing as fast paced, the chorus of *The Red Moon* danced with “speed,” which indicates that the team incorporated this minstrel form into *The Red Moon*.

Cole and Johnson, in their effort to aggrandize African American men, used what George Lipsitz calls turning negative ascription into positive affirmation by inverting the representative image of the Sambo. While the original representation gave audiences a happy, lazy, indolent black man, Cole and Johnson inverted the Sambo in *The Red Moon* to that of the matinee idol, a sex symbol, a member of society, and a well-dressed African American man with realistic stage makeup as opposed to blackface. The lyrics, the reviews, “*The Red Moon* Rays,” and Lester A. Walton’s columns attest to this characterization. After appearing in *Shoo Fly Regiment* (1906–1908), Edgar Connors originated the role of Sambo Simmons and the Grizzly Bear in *The Red Moon*. Connors sang “Sambo,” written by James Reese Europe (music) and Bob Cole (lyrics) in 1908. Sung in the last act with a Virginia homestead as the setting, Leona Marshall and Daisy Brown, who played his sisters Sally and Susan Simmons, accompanied Connors’s Sambo.

Cole’s lyrics transposed the image of Sambo to that of a freeman, a matinee idol. He discarded dialect, as theatergoers viewed a Sambo who sang in proper articulate English, implying an educated gentleman. Cole also jettisoned the slave image of the Sambo as his Sambo took on the mannerisms of a society “swell” whose etiquette remained impeccable and whose “name is in the ’Blue-books,” the antithesis of the disheveled, unkempt, uncouth, but happy slave. Cole provided the audience with a cosmopolitan yet likeable Sambo, a “fashion plate,” an urbane man whom children adore. Contrary to the asexual Sambo, Cole sexualized Sambo in the lyrics as the essential “pet of all the ladies,” and the idol of the boys.”

Sambo is a card with all the babies, They like him better than they do their toys. For Sambo is a cunning little creature; His manners and behavior they are fine—Sambo! Sambo, a fashion plate, a Flambo; Sambo is a lucky little Shine.

The team’s very use of the name Sambo evokes the stereotype, but the song and the characterization by Edgar Connors, his dress, his decorum on and offstage, and the publicity and reviews of *The Red Moon* all worked as a communal effort to overturn the Sambo image. This effort in effect revolutionized the image of the African American man on the stage, in public arenas, and
in private life. Both “*The Red Moon* Rays” and Walton’s theatrical jottings chronicled the permutation of Sambo. Connor’s Sambo Simmons actually metamorphosed into a stunning, charismatic, and desirable man, a suave gentleman whom women could not resist. Charles A. Hunter wrote “[m]en may come and men may go, but the matinee girls go on over ‘Sambo’ [Edgar Connor] forever.” Lester A. Walton wrote “DeWolf Hopper is appearing in a play called ‘A Matinee Idol,’ but Master Edgar Connors is ‘the real matinee idol,’ playing ‘Sambo’ in Cole and Johnson’s *The Red Moon Company.*” Through these newspaper articles Cole and Johnson transformed the Sambo and African American men into handsome and appealing bon vivants.

Aggrandizing African Americans also included the pursuit of scholarly endeavors such as poetry writing and participating in contests. Reflecting the efforts at transmuting the image of Sambo and of African American men, Walton’s “Theatrical Jottings” included commentary on Connors’ poetic talents.

Edgar Connor of The Red Moon Company is developing into a rhymer. The Age is in receipt of the following lines from Montreal, Canada: “While this beautiful snow does greatly please, one day in New York would set my heart at ease.”

The project to reform the image of black men with the inversion of the Sambo proved a noble undertaking. Unfortunately, the entrenchment of negative stereotypes of blacks remained deeply ingrained within the American psyche. While Cole and Johnson venerated blacks and Native Americans on stage by presenting affirmative images which embodied tropes of uplift, including self determination, marriage, and education, they also offered audiences stereotypes of the hungry Negro, a chorus of Pickaninnies, and at least in one instance, the use of the word “coon.” Although these clichés reflected African American theatrical devices of the early 1900s, one cannot deny that these images were damaging to blacks during Cole and Johnson’s time and still reverberate reprehensibly today in representations of blacks on stage and film and within rap music.

Bob Cole performed the comedic roles within the Cole and Johnson productions, while J. Rosamond Johnson portrayed the romantic and serious dramatic leads. Cole’s portrayal of Silas Brown embodied the stereotype of the hungry Negro. In 1908 Lester A. Walton argued that while Cole’s part as Silas Brown in *The Red Moon* offered audiences a better character than the one he played in *Shoo Fly Regiment*, he objected to Cole’s characterization of the hungry Negro for laughs. Walton pointed out that while the hungry
Negro remained a component of most black shows, it was a representation that African Americans producers should discard and leave behind. In addition, Cole also used the word “coon” in the production. Walton objected strongly and offers the reader a sample of the dialogue.

In a dialogue with Rosamond Johnson, Bob Cole puts in a line for the sake of a laugh that could be easily omitted. The dialogue:

ROSAMOND JOHNSON: “It’s a great chance to get some bear meat.”

BOB COLE: “You mean it’s a great chance to get some coon meat.”

Walton maintained that “the laugh comes from the white portion of the audience not the colored.” While Walton avidly supported Cole and Johnson in his articles, he vehemently objected to what he perceived as corrosive and harmful stereotypes. It appears that Cole and Johnson maintained the hungry Negro stereotypes throughout the tour of The Red Moon. Charles Hunter notes in the “The Red Moon Rays” that around January 28, 1909, a Billy Possum number was introduced in the show. Hunter states that: “[d]espite his mouth-watering description of ‘Bre’r Billy Possum’ in de pan wid sweet potatoes all around, Bob Cole will ever be remembered as the premier chicken dinner delineator.”

Cole and Johnson placed this dialogue and the song within the production to cater to white audiences. Walton warned them that “[a]s the stage is an educator, we should seek to omit all things that we would not like to happen to us in everyday life. The author of the lines would become highly insulted if called a “coon” in public and yet for the sake of a laugh applies the word to himself with apparently good grace.”

Several possibilities arise concerning the use of the hungry Negro stereotype and the use of the word “coon.” In a September 10, 1908, review of The Red Moon, Walton points out that although Shoo Fly Regiment was a superior show, with representations that included African American men as soldiers and heroes, the production did not cater to white audience tastes due to the presence of black men as soldiers and the lack of overt stereotypes. He suggested that The Red Moon accommodated whites with the presence of the hungry Negro stereotype. Yet while Cole and Johnson used negative stereotypes to indulge white audiences’ tastes and consequently profit financially, they also placed on stage new forms of black representations.
Absent from history
Stereotipik
Don’t pretend to know
Yo, America your letting your ignorance show
(Litefoot)

*The Red Moon* replicated and contested traditional stereotypes about Native Americans. Just as stereotypes of blacks came from the history of slavery, stereotypes of Indians emerged out of the experience of conquest. Three distinct themes emerged in the drawing of Native American stereotypes in U.S. culture: Indians as a monolithic group, Indians as deficient in the eyes of whites, and Indians as morally and spiritually corrupt. Europeans defined Native Americans as monolithic even though they never viewed themselves as a single group. Two thousand cultures and societies existed at the time of conquest with distinct languages, customs, and belief systems. Stereotypes that lump together all Indians include the “good” or Noble Indian, the “bad” or Savage Indian, and the “vanishing Indian.”

The Noble Indian is characterized as gentle, submissive, courageous, and at one with nature. The concept of primitivism played a key role in the drawing of Native Americans as noble. It influenced Renaissance explorers who cast them as paradise dwellers, free of the hindrances of modern society, free of a distinct history, and free of complex European society. Anglo and Spanish perceptions of Native Americans as noble included descriptions of them as sexually innocent, physically beautiful, peace-loving, in harmony with nature, and existing with no property, no injustice, and no monarchy.

The perception of Native Americans as gentle and willing to trade with Europeans originated with their first contact with Columbus in San Salvador in 1492, in which he described them as amenable, loving, and giving. In 1524, Verrazano portrayed the native people of New York as “joyful” and friendly. The idea of the new world as diametrically opposed to Europe (which at the time remained impoverished and war torn) played an integral part in the European mentality and worked to encourage European travel to the Americas. Trade encouraged overseas development and made it necessary for Europeans, most specifically English entrepreneurs, to paint Indians as friendly to European traders.

The Noble Savage image coexisted with the image of the uncivilized Indian. European dependence on the Indian kept the uncivilized image tempered, but it persisted nonetheless. For example, not only did Vespucci paint them as friendly and gentle, but he also described Indian women as sexually aggressive, so aggressive in fact that they caused men to lose their sexual
organs. The Noble Savage lacked Spanish standards of dress, government, civilization, religion, farming, morals, marriage, and trade.\textsuperscript{161}

The stereotype of the Indian as savage emerged to justify the forced removals of Indians in the East and the West from their land. Whites depicted Indians as “semi-human” at the same time they characterized them as noble. As the relationship between them changed due to white land lust, descriptions and perceptions of the Indians permutated from the “noble red man” to the “bloodthirsty savage,” a threat to civilization. This change reflected the growing brutal relationship that culminated in the attempt by whites to exterminate the Native American.\textsuperscript{162}

The image of the Native American as beast-like, savage, and hostile originated with literature written by the French and Spanish and adopted by the English around 1578.\textsuperscript{163} This stereotype of the Savage included descriptions of Native Americans as monolithic and primitive due, in part, to their preference for nudity and their non–Christian status. For example, Pocahontas’s father, Powhatan, was described as a savage, both majestic and “cruel yet not pitiless.”\textsuperscript{164} The description of Caribbean Indians as cannibals, long-haired, and ferocious also made its way into the white imagination.\textsuperscript{165} As is usual with white subjugation and stereotyping of people of color, there lay an ulterior motive. The stereotypes emerged to justify the appropriation of Indian lands and to justify Native American genocide by the Spanish and the English. The English found it easy to assert that, due to their uncivilized and non-Christian status, Indians remained unfit for land ownership. By defining the Indian as a savage and a “tawny beast,” the English as well as the Dutch, French, Portuguese, and Spanish found it easy to justify robbing Indian lands on moral grounds.\textsuperscript{166} Another component of the savage or the bad Indian included the white invention of the Degraded Indian or the Alcoholic Reservation Indian, an inebriated outsider to Indian and white society. Sherman Alexie’s novel \textit{Reservation Blues} (1995) introduces the alcoholic Indian Victor to the reader; the real-life descendant of Pocahontas, John Bolling, embodied this cliché.\textsuperscript{167}

The forced removal of Indians from the East, expansion in the West, and the reservation system promoted the image of the Indian as a vanishing race. This stereotype paints Indians as facing ultimate extinction due to the expansion of “civilization.” The forced removal of the assimilated Cherokee Indians in the 1830s from the point where Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina meet to Indian Territory offers an excellent example of how the stereotype of the Vanishing Race emerged in the white imagination.

The Cherokees accommodated whites and assimilated into white culture by adopting white standards such as living in towns, attending schools and
churches, and fighting on the American side during the War of 1812. They also held treaties with the United States dating back to 1791 in which the Anglos acknowledged the independence of the Cherokee nation and guaranteed that the Cherokees could keep their lands. Summarily, the Anglos broke the treaties and forcibly removed them from their lands. The Cherokees faced incarceration in 1838 and eventually the government coerced twelve thousand people to march to the Territories; twenty-five hundred people died on the trip known as the Trail of Tears. One Cherokee Chief aptly noted “The truth is if we had no lands, we should have [had] no enemies.” Forcible removals such as this contributed to the stereotype of the Vanishing Indian, because they no longer inhabited the southern region, and Anglos willingly forgot their existence in the East.

The inconsistent method of Anglo conquest in the West, which ultimately included the attempted genocide of Native Americans, contributed to the Vanishing Indian stereotype in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Because Native Americans inhabited the lands the Anglos wanted, they viewed them as a hindrance to civilization and western expansion. Anglos felt that Indians must disappear either through genocide or assimilation. These perceptions carried over into the nineteenth century with the use of similar methods to make the Native American population vanish. The Vanishing Indian stereotype made its way into fiction with books such as The Last of the Mohicans (1826) and in artwork through portraits of Indians on the plains and the prairie by George Caitlin. The concept of the Vanishing Indian through assimilation shaped the assimilationist goals at Hampton Institute. Administrators envisioned Native Americans’ assimilation through marriage into the white race, thus marking the end of the Indian race. The half-caste or mixed-race Indian also represented to whites a sign of the Vanishing Race.

Cole and Johnson challenged stereotypes concerning Native Americans in The Red Moon through the multilayered and complex character of Red Feather. Red Feather symbolized both Native American and African American resistance to hegemony, the boarding school experience, and reservation life. He embodied actual male students who attended Native American boarding schools and the biracial program at Hampton.

Theodore Pankey, an African American actor, portrayed Red Feather and is described in the Indianapolis Freeman as “a bold, bad Indian student at the school who is in love with Minnehaha.” Red Feather, an educated brave who Lester Walton notes reads a letter in the play, departed from demeaning portrayals of Native Americans. He represented neither the Bad Indian Savage, the Degraded Indian, the Vanishing Indian, nor even the Noble Indian,
but rather a new form of Indian, an educated Indian with a strong sense of agency, and one capable of romantic love. In the first act, Red Feather falls in love with Minnehaha and assists Chief Lowdog in returning her to her tribe in “The Land of the Setting Sun.” This action by a father who misses his daughter and by a young man who loves her sets in motion a struggle for Minnehaha’s affections between Red Feather and Plunk Green. Implicit in the action taken by Red Feather is not only love, but also a yearning to leave Swamptown Industrial Institute and return to his family on the reservation. By helping Chief Lowdog, Red Feather exhibits self-determination and agency.

Red Feather’s longing to escape school reflected the feelings of some of Hampton’s Native American students. Howling Wolf (Cheyenne), a Hampton student, expressed his desire to return West in a June 1879 letter to Captain Pratt from Darlington, Pennsylvania. His yearning to return home remains implicit throughout the letter but his awareness that he must negotiate with and appease Pratt also plays a vital role in the correspondence. Howling Wolf states, “when I was away from hear I had a nuf to eat and cloths to war when I hunted the Bufolo I was not [hungry].” He remains keenly aware that he must bargain with Pratt for the right to return home and assures Pratt, “when I was with you I did not want for any thing but I hear Pam Poos I would like to go out on the plains again where I could come at will and not come back a gain.” At the axis of Howling Wolf’s attempt to come to an agreement with Pratt is “but,” and with that word he presents the reason why Pratt should allow him to return home, so that he could travel freely to the plains. Throughout the letter he elucidates his awareness that Pratt wields power over him, but Howling Wolf continues to plead his case. He tries to persuade Pratt: “But before I take inch a step I [t]hough[t] best to ask you what you thought about it and hope you will write soon and tell me.” Howling Wolf ends the letter by discussing his plans if allowed to return to the plains, writing, “I think thare is a grate meny wild horse in Mexico and if I should got thare I could capture a hurd and bring them back hear then I would not be away. I should not harme any man should be friends to all bare while animals.” Like his real-life counterpart, Red Feather also longs to leave Swamptown and return home. Red Feather yearns for the freedom on the reservation to come and go as he pleases, as Howling Wolf so profoundly stated to “come at will and not come back a gain.” Similarities exist between Howling Wolf’s and Red Feather’s longing for home; differences also exist as in Red Feather’s recalcitrance and his overt agency in accomplishing his goal, whereas Howling Wolf covertly relays his message and tries to negotiate with his captor, Pratt, and Hampton. The scene in which Red Feather assists Chief
Lowdog in returning Minnehaha to the reservation illuminates Red Feather’s conscious and successful escape from the school and reservation life as he travels freely, not confined to the reservation or the school, for, as Native American rapper Litefoot avows, reservation life is no picnic.

Living in this world
No hope
Seeing all the pain in

Got to show your child there’s a better place
Livin’ on the rez.
(Litefoot\textsuperscript{176})

The scene with Red Feather reminds audiences that some Native American students rebelled against the Hampton assimilation program. The education of Native American students at Hampton Institute and the government boarding schools gave students a brutal and sometimes deadly indoctrination into “white civilization.”

According to Armstrong, the Hampton curriculum included a four-year program with students working during the day to pay for their room and board and taking classes at night. In 1888 and 1894, the male students’ classes included farming, blacksmithing, carpentry, printing, wheelwrighting, shoemaking, harness making, tinsmithing, printing, ironwork, farming, and training as “country school teachers.” The academic classes included math, English language study, reading, science, geography, history, economics, civil government, student teaching, agriculture, mental science, drawing, woodwork, singing, and gymnastics.\textsuperscript{177}

Former Fort Marion prisoners sent letters to Captain Pratt articulating the difficulty of their Hampton school training. Toun ke uh detailed the rigor of his education in a letter dated August 23, 1878, noting that he attended school two days a week “for it days very hard working. I like working and me of every study hard and very much I hope understand me.”\textsuperscript{178} Doanmoe, a famous ledger artist, writes of the absolute difficulty of the labor expected of him as a student in the summer “outing program.” In a July 4, 1879, letter from Lee, Massachusetts, he wrote “I am very sorry to say this, I am not very strong to do hard work, but I would not tell Mr. Hyde about it—how I am getting stronger.”\textsuperscript{179} Because of the forced labor practices, many of the children became horribly sick and died. The vast number of gravestones at both Hampton Institute and Pennsylvania’s Carlisle School bear witness to the suffering of the children and offers a poignant commentary on the cruelty of
the school experience. The children’s names remain prominently displayed on the markers, one ironically named “Abe Lincoln Son of Antelope Cheyenne January 17, 1880” (Carlisle) and another, “Lasute Whiteback, Gros Ventre, North Dakota Died Jan. 24, 1882 aged 15 yrs” (Hampton). Row upon row of Indian children’s gravestones punctuates the landscape at Hampton and Carlisle, resolutely demanding that we not forget them.

Hampton student Doanmoe expressed a strong desire to return home from his “Outing Program” in July 1879. “I has got a letter from home and it very nice letter—it from my brother M-beadle te—and Kiowa against too and they want me to come there. Capt. Pratt I wish to go with you when you goes that way and talk with—them what we can be done for them I wish I do that this summer when I think that way then my feel hurry about doing something for the Indians—Capt. Pratt you know I am trying to doing.” Given the harsh reality of his “education,” Doanmoe tried to negotiate his escape. Red Feather epitomizes these rebellious students, as opposed to those who languished or perished. He acts as the agent of his own life, openly flouting boarding school by traveling home and returning to the Indian way of life. Red Feather’s actions replicated some of the real-life Native American students who took it upon themselves to run away from the oppressive boarding school environment. Charles Eastman, a Lakota, fled from Flandreau, and in 1901, 114 boys ran from Carlisle. Red Feather symbolizes both Native American and African American students who fully resisted and challenged abuse and white domination at boarding schools.

One of the most amazing acts of resistance by the Native American students occurred at Haskell in 1919. They participated in a coordinated full-scale revolt. The students shut down the lights in the auditorium, broke lighting fixtures, helped themselves to the food supply, and one boy proposed lynching the principal, shouting, “Let’s string him up.” This act of insubordination illustrates how Native American students gained control of their lives. Red Feather symbolizes the spirit of these rebellious students because he made the decision to take command of his life by leaving Swamptown and the reservation.

Red Feather to some extent typified a bit of a villain in The Red Moon plot, due to his part in kidnapping Minnehaha, but Cole and Johnson’s drawing of the character as an educated and a romantic lead who exhibits agency in his quest to return home created a new delineation of Native American men. What the team accomplished with the character of Red Feather was a reinscribing of historical events, a reimagining of the lives of Native Americans from despair and longing to uplift, agency, and freewill. Red Feather represented a major accomplishment, as he personified the Hampton admin-
istrators’ worst fear, that the Indian student would return to the “blanket.”

By placing Red Feather in an industrial institution, Cole and Johnson contested the tensions that existed at Hampton between the two races and presented a school environment in which blacks and Native Americans coexisted peacefully. By drawing Red Feather as a romantic love interest to Minnehaha, they elevated the status of Native American males on campus. Considering that the heroine within *The Red Moon* was black/Native American, the team fully rejected the theatrical love scene proscription and the romance hierarchy at Hampton Institute, by placing on stage passion and love between a Native American man and a black/Native American woman.

In the second act of *The Red Moon*, “In the Land of the Setting Sun,” Cole and Johnson romanticized and humanized Red Feather further by allowing him to sing the love song “On the Road to Monterey,” with words and music by Bob Cole. This song and the production number mirrored the real-life yet forbidden romances between African American women and Native American men at Hampton. The *Southern Workman* of 1879 reported instances of Native American boys’ attraction to black girls and recounted that “When asked if he would take an educated squaw or one of the Indian women at home to wife, [one boy] replied, ‘No, I marry a colored girl; she will teach me good English.” White teacher Caroline Andrus noted in her 1909 report on former student Alex Payer, who returned to Winnebago, Nebraska, that his “wife has Negro blood.” “On The Road to Monterey” in essence replicated the types of amorous relationships that emerged between Native American males like Alex Payer and African American women. The song conveys these love affairs as we imagine Red Feather singing the song to Minnehaha as they travel west. A reviewer for the *Indianapolis Freeman* noted, “In this scene is put on one of the most pretentious and best-dressed song numbers I have ever seen staged by colored performers. The song was ‘On the Road to Monterey,’ sung by Theodore Pankey, backed by a chorus of exquisite sweetness both in voice and costume.” The *New York Age* stated that “Theo. Pankey is as pleasing in his new song ‘On the Road to Monterey,’ as he was in ‘On the Gay Luneta.” Charles D. Mars of the *Indianapolis Freeman* stated, “[t]he lineup of the chorus girls in this number equaled anything that was ever produced on Broadway.” These reviews indicate that this scene presented audiences with a big production number. The lyrics tell us that Red Feather sang in standard English as opposed to dialect English—“[W]hen that pretty senorita gave me a tiny kiss, how it filled my soul with such aesthetic bliss.” “On the Road to Monterey” explored the romance and tenderness between Red Feather and Minnehaha.
Ultimately, Red Feather personified the lived experiences of many Native American students attending boarding schools. As the “bold, bad Indian student,” he represented a hero for Native American students through his resistance to domination both on the reservation and at the school. Red Feather possessed resolve as a lover who romances an African American woman in the face of proscription by contumaciously ignoring the romance hierarchy at Hampton Institute. Finally, he embodied the worst fears of white teachers, administrators, and the surrounding communities by refusing to assimilate, by holding on steadfastly to his culture and heritage, and by defiantly and proudly returning to the blanket.

Arthur Talbot’s character Chief Lowdog personified some of the common delineations of Native Americans but at the same time offered audiences new ways of understanding Indians as loving fathers and husbands. Born in 1875 in Dresden, Ontario, Talbot moved with his family to Chatham. At fourteen he moved to Detroit, Michigan, making his stage debut at the age of sixteen as an old man in a dramatic play. Talbot began to appear in churches reciting Shakespeare, eventually performing in Buffalo, New York, in scenes from Othello, his favorite play. He studied acting with Professor Schultz and, at twenty-one, moved to New York and studied under Professor Lawrence. Bob Cole discovered Talbot in New York when Talbot recited from Samson and Julius Caesar at St. Mark’s Church. After seeing his performance, Elizabeth Williams, “an actress of ability” who later played Lucretia Martin in The Red Moon, asked Talbot to join her successful road company. In 1906 he joined Shoo Fly Regiment at Cole’s invitation.

At the age of thirty-three, Arthur Talbot joined The Red Moon, originating the role of Chief Lowdog. According to Charles Cameron White, after the closing of Shoo Fly Regiment, Talbot “was given one of the best dramatic parts ever written for a Negro in the character of ‘John [Lowdog],’ the old Indian chief and his acting is one of the hits of the play. Mr. Talbott says he owes his success to Bob Cole, to whom he gives credit for ‘bringing him out,’ and whom he characterizes as a great teacher, a great actor and a great playwright.”

A complicated representative image and characterization emerged within the character of Chief Lowdog. One reviewer described the character as adhering to the stereotype of the degraded Indian “charged up with firewater,” thus the insulting name Lowdog. Bob Cole’s notes also point to this form of representation with the note for Chief Lowdog to say in one scene “Same place no champagne.” Although the team adhered to stereotypes, several innovations emerged in Chief Lowdog. The description of Chief Lowdog as an “old Chief,” and as “charged up with firewater,” offers a
radically different perception of the character than that which appears in a publicity photograph. Talbot’s photograph in the *New York Age* moves away from conveying the stereotype of the degraded Indian. The portrait offers the viewer a very dignified and handsome Indian. As Chief Lowdog, Talbot does not appear to represent the alcoholic Indian, but rather a very attractive Indian in a strong stance. Talbot wears a feathered headdress, and is dressed in what appears as genuine Native American clothing. I would also like to propose that his portrayal of dramatic Shakespearean roles suggests that Talbot infused Chief Lowdog with an Othello- or a Caesar-like dignity. Talbot’s career as a Shakespearean actor gives us some understanding of how Cole and Johnson envisioned Native Americans within *The Red Moon*.

Chief Lowdog also moves away from stereotypical representation because of his romantic pairing with the African American character of Lucretia Martin. This coupling discards the love scene taboo, the prohibition against interracial romance, and the notion that the progeny of mixed couples are doomed.

Several reviews identify Talbot’s portrayal of Chief Lowdog as an authentic rendering of Native Americans. Charles D. Mars of the *Indianapolis Freeman* states, “Arthur Talbot as ‘John Lowdog’ gave the public its first taste of Indian character work with merit by a Negro. His masterly work was as much responsible for the success of *The Red Moon* as any part of the show.” Clarence Cameron White described Talbot as one of the “most promising young character actors on the stage.” Similarly, Charles A. Hunter asserted that “Arthur Talbot, (John Lowdog) has the best and strongest legitimate part ever written for a colored actor,” while Walton stated, “[o]ne would think that he was really an Indian, so true does he play his character.” The attempt to portray Native Americans authentically appears an important component to both Cole and Johnson and to the members of the cast. As guests of the Iroquois Tribe on the Caugnawago Reservation in Montreal, both Arthur Talbot and Theodore Pankey bought “several unique and costly Indian relics, namely moccasins, beaded leggings, pipes, arrow heads.” They also conceivably learned about the Iroquois, and the presumption that they incorporated their knowledge of the Iroquois into their characterizations remains a very real possibility. According to Charles A. Hunter, Talbot’s makeup was so authentic that a letter to the *New York Age* inquired as to his tribal heritage. Cole turned the answer into a joke and answered that after a careful investigation of Lowdog’s heritage he discovered that “‘Lowdog’ was a discreet descendant from the anti-Nomian, but non-anthropophagi (plural),” a fearless tribe in the New York area whose numbers are great.
While *The Red Moon* included some Native American characterizations which deviated from stereotypes, the portrayal of the Indian chiefs’ war council in the second act conformed to clichéd portrayals. Cole’s theatrical notes allow us a window in which we can view the depiction of the Native American male characters:


PHelps: John low dog he me hold a council about Red Moon How?

LUCAS: Must we wait longer for him?

DELYON: No! Red moon say call braves for war dance.

BROWN: Some are came still longer.199

We cannot deny that this piece of dialogue replicates the most reprehensible representations of Native Americans as inarticulate speakers of pidgin English, conforming to the historical period in which degrading renderings of Native Americans and African Americans remained the norm. Cole and Johnson’s characterization of the Indian chiefs serves as a degrading reminder of the forms of representation that worked to elevate one aggrieved community while deriding another. But like the New Orleans black Mardi Gras Indians who began masquerading in the 1880s as a form of resisting white hegemony and racial and class oppression, we can consider that perhaps Cole and Johnson’s Indian Chiefs represented opposition to the dominant society. The African American working-class men of New Orleans who through masquerade, music, and dance subverted white domination by dressing as Plains Indians and claiming a lineage in which the recurring narratives included bellicose and heroic warriors defying white supremacy, allowed them to overcome their oppressive environs, much in the same manner as the African American men masked as Indian chiefs in *The Red Moon*. The Indian Chiefs publicly resisted hegemony by participating in a war dance and other “Native American” forms prohibited by the United States government, like their real-life Lakota counterparts who in 1890 defied white authority by following the Ghost Dance Religion at the Pine Ridge Reservation. The Lakota ultimately faced slaughter by the United States government in the Massacre at Wounded Knee.200 In a similar vein of resisting white power, Native American boarding school students compelled to play European music, perform in pageants, oratorical debates, and stereotypical plays written about Native Americans by whites, put these cultural productions “to their own social, political, economic, and even religious uses,” by returning to the reservation and reviving forbidden Native American dances and songs and becoming political leaders
arguing for Native American sovereignty and rights. Surprisingly, these students took no offense to these demeaning portrayals. Like the Mardi Gras Indians and the Native American boarding school children, Cole and Johnson’s contumaciousness against white power manifested itself within the reprehensible cliche of the Indian chiefs. By “playing Indian,” dancing the prohibited “war dance,” and renouncing white man’s interdictions, the team claimed agency and freedom from white control in the same vein as the Mardi Gras Indians, even while they replicated virulent stereotypes of Native Americans.

According to Lester Walton, who credited Bob Cole with writing The Red Moon script, Cole placed the African American characters in the musical within a context created to dignify the group. The black characters’ depiction included the desire for education while showing a great respect for law and order. Some of the Indians within the production on the other hand exhibited total disregard for “White man’s laws.” The portrayal of the Indians included the characterization of them as nomadic forest dwellers who rejected the white man’s civilization. With the placement of two educated Indians within the production and the two romances between Indians and blacks, however, the team portrayed Native Americans and blacks as equals in education and love.

**Critiquing White Civilization**

It may appear that Cole and Johnson placed blacks over Native Americans by portraying blacks as civilized and by portraying some of the Native American characters as uncivilized, but I believe that Cole intended a critique of white civilization within the production. By characterizing the Native Americans as disrespectful of the white man’s law, Cole exposed and reproved the barbaric behavior of whites in his lifetime through the Native American characters. Cole argued that white man’s laws and behavior proved unworthy of emulation.

Bob Cole’s scrapbook offers some understanding of his views on portraying African Americans as exemplars. In 1893, Cole began collecting a myriad of articles on various subjects concerning blacks at the turn of the century. His scrapbook contained stories about African American heroes and heroines, including twenty-three-year-old Lulie A. Lytle, the first African American woman admitted to the bar in Memphis, Tennessee, on September 8, 1895; Flipper Anderson, the first black to attend West Point; Bishop Abraham Grant, a black philosopher; and Booker T. Washington. Cole also saved articles regarding Menelek, the Ethiopian ambassador to France, and
an illustration depicting the Ethiopians’ defeat of the Italians. All of this exemplifies Bob Cole’s interest in Africans in the Diaspora.203

Cole’s scrapbook also allows us to discern his viewpoints on “White civilization,” which I believe acted as the foundation for his characterization of the black and Native Americans within The Red Moon. It contained articles about white on black violence, black self-protection, and political and social injustice. They inform us that Cole showed extreme interest in self-determination, the protection of African Americans, and elevating their status. For example, he saved an article concerning Miss Flagger, a white who shot and killed Ernest Green, a black middle-class youth in Washington D.C. Another article details the lynching of two men in Vicksburg, Mississippi. In addition, Cole saved articles concerning self-defense. A September 9, 1895, article in the Sun discussed how a black man protected himself against a white man by hitting him with a rock. The black man ultimately lost his life at the hands of whites. Another article entitled, “Negroes Shot to Kill in Race War” detailed white violence against blacks in their community on Thirty-ninth Street in New York City. This article also discussed how blacks fought back against white violence by shooting to kill. Cole kept articles concerning white supremacists’ efforts to disenfranchise blacks in Florida in 1898. In saving stories on white barbarism that included the massive lynching and shooting of blacks, Cole chronicled the violent behavior of whites, which informs us of the possible reasons why the Indian characters within The Red Moon spurned “white man’s laws” and civilization.204

Bob Cole’s family history also lends itself to renouncing white civilization, which had proved violent and barbaric for both blacks and Native Americans in Georgia and Florida. As a man who escaped lynching at the age of fifteen in Georgia and as the son of a black Seminole slave whose family probably was captured and enslaved in the white wars against the Seminoles, Cole was no admirer of “White civilization.” He most certainly fought on and off stage to dignify African Americans and to demand deference and freewill within his historical milieu. The exclusion of whites from the story of The Red Moon and the critique of white civilization all worked to create on stage an environment in which blacks and Native Americans exhibited self-determination, individuality, and respectability. The characterization of the Native Americans within The Red Moon might appear retrograde, but I would like to argue that given Cole’s background and his erudition regarding U.S. and world events, Cole decisively included a critique of white U.S. barbarism in his Native American characters. Furthermore, Minnehaha departs from any stereotypical, degrading characterization on the stage, shining forth as the epitome of splendor.
The interracial romance in *The Red Moon* contested taboos against “miscegenation” on and off stage. Cole and Johnson rejected stereotypes of African American women that saturated the American psyche and presented Minnehaha, played by African American singer Abbie Mitchell, as the ideal American woman, as educated and virtuous, effecting changes in perceptions about not only African American women but Native American women as well.

The black female stereotype of the Jezebel and the stereotype of the Native American as overtly sexual, seductive, and carnal particularly permeated the white imagination. The creation of these stereotypes helped to justify the sexual conquest and abuse of Native American and black women. Historically, Native American women faced sexual subjugation by both the Spanish and British due in part to the lack of white women in the Americas. In Georgia and the Carolinas, sexual relations between Anglo men and Indian women in the 1700s remained quite common. In Virginia and North Carolina, legislatures later outlawed marriage between Native Americans and whites, which implies that sexual relations occurred between the two groups. The stereotype of the lascivious woman of color arose out of these very real situations, as a project designed to justify sexual contact and sexual abuse.

At the other end of the spectrum, the characterization in literature and film of Native American women as Noble Savages existed in conjunction with the lustful Native American woman stereotype. The Indian princess Pocahontas offers an excellent model of the Native American woman as noble. In 1607, Powahatan and his tribe kept the Jamestown settlers alive by supplying them with food. Twelve-year-old Pocahontas allegedly saved John Smith from a mock execution and worked as an emissary and an ambassador for her father to the settlers of Jamestown. In 1613, Pocahontas married John Rolfe in a political alliance made by her father as part of a truce with the British. Pocahontas died in 1617 in England after promoting Jamestown and raising money for the Virginia Company. Thus the female Noble Savage was born. Berkhoffer notes appropriately that writers revised nineteenth-century historical figures such as Pocahontas who were “safely dead and historically [in the] past” as the embodiment of Indian nobility.

The mixed-race stereotype of the Native American woman existed with three distinct components: as mongrel and deficient, as doomed, and as member of a dying race. In this view, the Native American, when mixed
with another nonwhite race, created a mongrel who remained physically and mentally deficient and posed a danger to white civilization.\textsuperscript{208} The stereotype of the doomed, mixed-race Native American made its way into fiction with works such as Mrs. Ann Sophia Winterbotham’s \textit{Maleska; the Indian Wife of the Hunter} (1860s). The main theme within this type of literature included the warning that a life of doom and despair awaits women who intermarried and their offspring. In this case Maleska agrees to her dying husband’s request to raise her mixed-race child as white as opposed to Indian. Despite her promise, whites take her son away and she returns to her tribe where they plan her execution. Her former Indian suitor helps her to escape, but in the end she and her son die just as her son’s marriage to a white woman is about to take place.\textsuperscript{209}

Integral to the plot is the prohibition of miscegenation. This theme also made its way onto the Broadway stage and into movies with both the Broadway and film production of \textit{Whoopee}. This show originally played on Broadway from 1928 to 1929 and became a Florenz Ziegfield-produced movie in 1931. The film revolved around the story of Wanenis, who finds that “white people hate me” because of his one drop of Indian blood that prevents him from marrying the white ingénue, Sally. At the end of the movie, Black Eagle, Wanenis’s Indian father, reveals that Wanenis is actually white, and that Black Eagle’s only relationship to him lay in the fact that he raised him, making it possible for Wanenis to marry Sally.\textsuperscript{210} Another component to the mixed-race stereotype is that of the dying race. Hampton Institute’s Helen Ludlow and Captain Pratt felt that the amalgamation of the Native American and white race would contribute to their assimilation and to the Native American’s demise.

Cole and Johnson made a concerted effort to jettison stereotypes of Native American and African American women in the character of Minnehaha. First and foremost, due to her attendance at Swamptown Institute Minnehaha represented an educated woman. She embodied a chaste and virtuous woman, not a hypersexual one. Minnehaha moved away from the Noble Savage, the half-breed, and the dying race Indian stereotypes.

The role of Minnehaha in many ways acted as a composite of the African American and Native American teachers and students at Hampton. African American student and teacher Amelia Perry Pride personified the ideals of uplift represented in Minnehaha. Upon graduation, Pride returned to Lynchburg, Virginia as a teacher; married Claiborne G. Pride, a barber; and bore three children.\textsuperscript{211} Pride asserted that “I am teaching school, and my aim is to remain teaching as long as there is a piece left of me. I find it rather hard though sometimes, but then I love my work. My heart seems to yearn to be
among my people, and try and teach them in every way, both educationally and morally.”

The character of Minnehaha also mirrored Native American student Anna Dawson’s life. Dawson graduated from Hampton in 1885; taught at Hampton from 1885 to 1887; married Byron Wilde (Sioux); and worked as a teacher, a church worker, and as a field matron, a job that entailed teaching domestic skills and the codes of Victorian morals to Native Americans at Fort Berthold. By discarding the stereotypes of African American and Native American women, Cole and Johnson took the positive aspects of the education at Hampton, the glorifying of the race, education that reflected scholarship, and the marriage right—and eliminated the education that included laundry work and domestic labor. The character of Minnehaha replicated the lives of Amelia Perry Pride and Anna Dawson.

Minnehaha also broke the love scene taboo in stage depictions and the interdictions set in place at Hampton Institute which prevented black and Native American romance in the romantic intrigue, which paired her with Native American Red Feather and African American Plunk Green. Minnehaha also sang the romantic ballad “The Pathway of Love” in the production, which symbolized a definitive break of the love scene taboo.

**Abbie Mitchell and Minnehaha**

The connections between Abbie Mitchell and Minnehaha remain both multifaceted and intriguing and allow us to see that what happens off stage directly effects what happens on stage. Mitchell appeared in *The Red Moon* between 1908 and 1909, but her social thought emerged at the beginning of her theatrical career when she renegotiated her status as a performer by discarding the stigma associated with black women on the stage. She reimagined the stage as a place to ennoble African American women and worked to dignify theatrical life. In doing this, she carved a site for herself and others in African American and white society, despite attempts by some in the black and white communities to degrade her due to her career choice. The character of Minnehaha conveyed Mitchell’s effort to dignify the stage and, in effect, symbolized a new and emancipatory black female subject.

Abbie Mitchell’s early family life played a central role in her development and in her social thought. Mitchell’s family consisted of loving and supportive black aunts who worked as domestics and a kind and caring Jewish father. Her family encouraged the young Mitchell in all aspects of life, including her educational pursuits. This family instilled in Mitchell self-assurance, a sense
of her worth as a human being, and an unbreakable pride. Insulated from the prescripts of hegemony concerning her mixed-race background, when faced with prejudice, Mitchell fully rejected any labels. The part of Minnehaha mirrored Mitchell’s idea of self through its abnegation of Native American and African American stereotypes and celebration of intermarriage. The character embodied a Mitchellesque persona. Mitchell also used education as a form of freedom from the restrictions placed on theatrical women. Cole and Johnson envisioned the character of Minnehaha as educated, and that mirrored Mitchell.

Abbie Mitchell was born on September 25, 1884, on East Third Street in New York City to a dark-skinned African American mother and a Jewish father. Mitchell recalled that her mother died in childbirth and “bequeathed me to her oldest sister, Alice.” Raised by her aunt Alice in Baltimore, Maryland, Abbie recalled being reared “with tenderness and understanding.” Her Aunt Josephine as well as her grandparents also played an instrumental role in her upbringing. After Mitchell’s mother’s death, her father actively participated in her nurturing. She remembered her father as a “serene and kindly” man and recalled with affection “[t]he quiet father whose gentleness I shall never forget.” Mitchell remembered a loving relationship with her father, a father who made her shoes, built her dollhouses, and who “never felt I needed chastisement for anything.” At the age of thirteen, she moved to New York to spend the summer with her Aunt Josephine.

Abbie Mitchell’s social thought emerged around this time. When she was thirteen and living with her Aunt Josephine on West 33rd Street, Billy English, a black vaudevillian, heard her singing and asked her Aunt Josephine to allow Abbie to audition for the African American composer Will Marion Cook’s Clorindy: or The Origin of the Cakewalk. Mitchell recalled her aunt’s reaction: “‘But she’s only a child,’ my aunt objected, ‘and besides, nice girls don’t go on the stage.’” Reluctantly, Aunt Josephine allowed Mitchell to display her talents. Abbie Mitchell later recalled that at the time she herself disapproved of African American music and women on the stage. She most certainly acquired this viewpoint from her family. Yet she auditioned for the famous African American composers Will Marion Cook and H. T. Bureleigh, as well as the respected African American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. She won a place in the show.

After appearing in Clorindy throughout the summer of 1898, Mitchell returned to Baltimore and to school, only to discover that her foray into the world of the theater irrevocably stained her reputation. She discovered, after “proudly” giving her Aunt Alice the “small fortune” she made on stage, that her aunt cried when informed how Mitchell earned the money. Given the
stigma attached to stage life, Mitchell’s aunt forced her to return to school. She recalled that “[b]ack to school I went, to find myself snubbed by all my former playmates. What was wrong? What had I done? I was stunned.” Not only did she face the disapproval of her aunt, but her friends and classmates suddenly looked down upon her as a result of her life on the stage. She later recalled:
Gradually I was made to understand that I had committed the unforgivable crime: I had been on the stage, which meant that I had become a lewd girl at thirteen. The narrow-mindedness, the stupidity of my Baltimore friends astounded me, and yet I could understand it.\(^{223}\)

Abbie Mitchell’s playmates ostracized her because of her foray into the theater. She received unwanted attention from men and boys as a result of the perception that she was a “lewd girl.” Mitchell recounted one such occasion, “a young man much older than I decided that I was easy prey and proceeded to get fresh. I whipped him, scratched his face, and tore his clothes. He went home considerably wiser about ‘women of the theatre.’”\(^{224}\)

Mitchell refused to accept societal attempts to debase her. She transcended the perception of the immoral woman of the theater and physically fought for respect. Mitchell writes that this experience as well as the banishment by her classmates deeply hurt her and proved emotionally painful. Despite her pleas to attend school in another city, her Aunt Alice insisted she remain in Baltimore. She cried herself to sleep nightly and recounted that “[w]ith morning, I’d go back to my torture with a heavy heart. My pride upheld me during this trying time, plus the conviction that I really was a good girl.”\(^{225}\)

Abbie Mitchell’s Aunt Alice eventually relented and allowed her to return to New York, where she rejoined the tour of Cook’s Clorindy. Upon her return to the production, Mitchell won the leading lady role and received seventy-five dollars a week for her performances.\(^{226}\) According to Mitchell, this turn of events deflected the stigma attached to the stage. As a result of her new prominent position in the production she gained the respect and admiration of both the African American and the theater community. Mitchell realized at the age of thirteen that she could invert ideas about girls on the stage. She negotiated her social rank through her association with the theater, and adopted a strong persona. The character of Minnehaha mirrored Mitchell’s renegotiation of her class status and symbolized a new and emancipatory black and Indian female subject.

A photograph of a teenage Abbie Mitchell, probably taken around 1898, offers us a window through which we can discern her resilience, self-assurance, and unbreakable spirit (figure 17).

Nan Enstad argues that during the early part of the twentieth century, working-class European immigrant women factory workers dressed elegantly to demand the status of a lady and the respectability denied them because of their position in society. Similarly black women used dress to signify class status and dignity. Abbie Mitchell made a concerted effort to convey stature through her attire. In the photo, Mitchell wears white pear-shaped earrings
and her hair is wrapped elaborately, with flowers placed prominently on the right side of her head. She displays two metal bracelets on her right arm, one near her elbow and one below. On her left wrist she wears a white bracelet. Mitchell’s attire consists of an ornate virginal white dress, with a scooped neck and a flower close to her left shoulder. Flowers adorn the center of the waist, while flowers and lace drape down the center of the dress, and lace sleeves add a complementary touch to the garment. She dresses in virginal white intentionally to command respectability, signify her purity, and connote a class status that she would not be denied. The picture captures Mitchell with her hands clasped firmly in front of her, tightly, almost protectively, conceivably guarding her from outside forces.

The photograph also offers us a view of Mitchell’s spirit. Her big black eyes stare at the camera and convey both sadness and defiance, with not a hint of a smile threatening to part her lips. She looks small yet steely and strong, and her straight back and proud stance suggest a strong personality. Mitchell appears both somber and bold, a determined little girl who commands deference. Perhaps her experience with overcoming the stain attached to the stage, or her plucky personality, elicited such a provocative gaze from an amazingly resilient little girl.

Abbie Mitchell soon learned that marriage raised her repute still higher and enabled her metamorphosis. Marriage offered an avenue through which blacks gained propriety and projected middle-class normalcy in a society that attempted to denigrate and lower their status at every turn. Abbie Mitchell married composer Will Marion Cook in New York after touring with Clorindy in 1899. Mitchell described him as “a man more than twice my age, a giant in experience, a sincere student of music despite all statements to the contrary.” She recalled “the doors of the most important offices opened to him without hesitation.” The marriage allowed Mitchell to reconfigure her place in society by wedding one of the most prominent black composers of the day and by becoming a well-respected singer. Ultimately, marriage and stage life allowed Abbie Mitchell to achieve middle class propriety and status.

The role of Minnehaha proved the ultimate means to reconfiguring the rank of both Native Americans and African Americans. Most importantly, playing the character worked to ennoble Mitchell. In the play, Minnehaha’s marriage to the lawyer Plunk Green enhances her reputation and rank. Abbie Mitchell used marriage in her life to transcend her background. Her marriage to the middle-class Cook enabled Mitchell to transfigure her position as a performer. Similarly, the character of Minnehaha garnered middle-class politesse through the fictional marriage to Plunk Green.
Abbie Mitchell reached the meridian because of her marriage, but she soon discovered that Cook’s middle-class family scorned her because of her Jewish background. Their opinion reflected the African American elite’s response to interracial relationships in both the North and the South.

In the South the black elite believed that relationships between African American women and white men equaled sexual depravity. For the black elite these relationships and their offspring signified an unwanted reminder of slavery. Northern black elites held similar viewpoints and saw interracial unions as a threat to the African American family, “class survival,” and propriety.229 Both groups subjected those who became involved in interracial marriages to gossip and ridicule, and argued against miscegenation based on the grounds that it would weaken the race. They viewed those involved in these unions as “race traitors” who rejected racial solidarity and tried to pass for white.230 The majority of the black elite rejected miscegenation; but some, including many light-skinned members, felt that to raise their status they should marry white or marry light. Willard B. Gatewood notes that in New York between 1877 and 1918 the majority of outmarriages occurred between African Americans of the lower and middle classes, with a minute number of marriages occurring among the black upper class, for example, the African American sisters Maud and Cora Clamorgan of St. Louis, who married white men. Gatewood attests that during this period the number of marriages between African American women and white men matched those of African American men and white women. Because of the interdiction, the black elite for the most part avoided interracial marriages and dating for fear of marrying a white not of their same class or economic ilk, thereby losing their class status. Coercion by the greater African American and white community also acted as a potent prohibition against marrying whites, and those who stepped over the color line faced the wrath of the African American community.231 For example, many African Americans expressed extreme repugnance for Frederick Douglass’s second marriage, to a white woman. Douglass addressed the animosity he experienced in a March 18, 1884, letter:

My marriage has brought to me clouds, and darkness, and stormy criticism for offending popular prejudice, but there is peace and happiness within. I was unwilling to allow the world to select a wife for me, but preferred to select for myself, and the world is displeased with my independence. Dust will rise, but if well let alone will settle. It has already begun to do so in this case.232

Douglass experienced great resistance to his marriage, but felt that the African American community would eventually accept his union. They did not.
The resistance to interracial unions took on added meaning when the romantic relationships occurred with those aggrieved communities that the dominant society designated as not white. The nineteenth century signaled the rise in nativism and anti-Semitism with the arrival of white ethnics including Jewish people, who posed an economic threat to the white Anglo nation. Because of their working-class background in construction, the garment industry, as factory workers, longshoreman, coachmen, artisans, and tailors, and their menace to hegemony due to their very presence in the United States, the white power structure assigned to Jewish people the marginal status of nonwhite. If the black elite remained antipathetic to marrying whites not of their social ilk, then marriage to Jewish people remained completely verboten given their low caste status in U.S. society. The African American elite had to position Jewish people as unworthy of them; the risk that their rank would decline remained too great. Victoria Earle Matthews expressed the sentiment of some of the black elite in the 1800s when she wrote of the danger that the Jewish man posed to the working-class southern black women relocating north for work. Matthews warned that these women should steer clear and beware of Jewish men, for she suspected them of luring African American women into immoral sexual activities. In spite of the proscription against these unions by the black elite, it appears that no such ban existed among the working class, and in some cases the black middle and upper class married Jewish men.

Physical location influenced the relationships that might manifest themselves between African Americans and Jewish people. In many communities across the country African Americans lived side by side with Jewish people and found kindred spirits and like interests, which culminated in romance and marriages. Paul Spickard affirms that between 1700 and 1800, with the first two waves of Jewish immigration to the United States, a large number of Jewish people married outside their race and religion, with the Gentiles absorbing a large component of the Sephardic Jewish population. In the nineteenth century, because of the lack of Jewish women in their locale, German Jewish men intermarried, as occurred in New Orleans where they married African American women. According to Joshua D. Rothman, between 1796 and 1837 David Isaacs, a Jewish mercantile business owner in Charlottesville, Virginia, maintained a marital relationship with Nancy West, a free black woman who bore him seven children. While these marriages occurred, some in the African American community expressed antipathy toward them. As members of the black elite, the Cook family belonged to the category of those who remained antagonistic to such unions and considered Jewish people inferior to African Americans, given their working-class
backgrounds. Abbie Mitchell remained outside of the Cook family’s elite circle because of her mother’s and aunts’ careers as domestics and her working-class Jewish father.

Lynn Nottage’s play *Intimate Apparel* (2005) reflects the types of associations that blossomed between African Americans and Jewish people at the turn of the twentieth century. The play is set in 1905 in the Lower East Side of New York. Esther, a thirty-five-year-old African American seamstress, lives in a boarding house that resembles the White Rose Industrial Home for Colored Girls. Esther makes intimate apparel for both the ladies of the night and ladies of leisure. She buys fabrics of splendor, brilliance, and beauty for these garments from Mr. Marks, a Jewish fabric merchant who lives in her neighborhood. The play alludes to the real lived experiences of African Americans and Jewish people at the turn of the century who, because of their class status, lived in the same communities as Esther and Mr. Marks and Abbie Mitchell’s parents.

Mr. Marks’s and Esther’s friendship appears as a casual one in which they share similar affinities, but just below the surface of their relationship is an attraction that threatens to erupt. On a visit to his “shop,” a one-room tenement flat, Mr. Marks and Esther participate in a romantic dance of words concerning gorgeous fabrics. Marks encourages Esther to buy a piece of beautiful Japanese silk to make something nice for herself, or he suggests, probing into her personal life, that perhaps she could make a smoking jacket for her “gentleman friend.” Embarrassed by Marks’s suggestion, Esther informs him that she remains without a gentleman suitor. As the conversation comes to an uncomfortable halt, they somehow return to commenting on the brilliant fabrics, an interaction which causes Esther so much happiness that she warmly grabs Mr. Marks hand. He pulls his hand away from her, offending Esther, who tells him scornfully “the color won’t rub off on you.” He tries to right the misunderstanding by telling Esther that in his religion he must not touch a woman who is not his wife; he also informs her that his fiancée through an arranged marriage lives in Romania. Esther offers “‘I bet you miss her something awful’ (Marks rubs his hand where Esther touched him. He laughs, a bit self-consciously).” Marks states, “‘I haven’t even met her, actually.’” Later in the play Esther visits Marks to buy material and they again bond and laugh over textiles and, as his back is turned, she touches him very lightly, leaving the audience to wonder if Marks felt her touch and pretended not to notice. Later in the play as Esther fits white society woman Mrs. Van Buren for a garment Esther confides that she disregarded a taboo: “‘I touched someone, who I knew I wasn’t supposed to touch. I touched them because I wanted to, it was wrong but I couldn’t help myself.’” At
the end of the play after some life disappointments, which culminated in a loveless marriage for Esther that dissolved humiliatingly, she presents Mr. Marks with the fine Japanese silk smoking jacket that he suggested she make for her “gentleman friend.” This jacket represents marriage and love to both Esther and Mr. Marks, which I believe signals the beginning of their amorous relationship and the end of the play. Intimate Apparel in some respects mirrors the real-life relationships that manifested itself between African American women like Abbie Mitchell’s mother and her Jewish father. Mitchell in some ways symbolizes the offspring of the union between Mr. Marks and Esther. The play also represents the types of romance that the black elite, like the Cooks, vehemently opposed and helps explain why they treated Abbie Mitchell so cruelly.

Mitchell discovered that her family background caused the Cook family and some of the black elite to question her rank and worthiness. While she achieved a level of veneration because of her marital status, Cook’s family rebuffed her because of her family background. After a difficult delivery of their daughter, Mitchell recuperated at the Cook family home where she confronted hostility. Mercer Cook, Abbie Mitchell’s son, states that the Cook family was excessively caste and class conscious. The Cooks violently resented Abbie. “A child of miscegenation,” as they called her, because her father had been a Jew. The family complained that Cook had “turned up with a little nobody, almost twenty-three years his junior.” “She’s nothing but a chorus girl,” Abbie [could] hear Will’s mother, Aunt Mick, brother, and sister-in law [state] in the next room the very first night of her arrival. “She hasn’t even a high school education. And she was reared by two aunts who work as domestics!”

Mitchell insisted that her husband remove her from the Cook family home, telling him, “Mr. C. get me out of this house today or I’ll crawl down the steps!” Will Marion Cook removed her immediately and housed her with his white friend Miss Louise Lamprey, an editorial staff writer at the Washington Star. Mitchell proved herself a strong-willed, determined woman who would not put up with mistreatment. Mitchell did not fit into the upper-class mold of the Cooks, which certainly led to and compounded her humiliating rejection by the family. To the Cook family she remained an affront, degraded because of her Jewish father and her mother’s and aunts’ working-class background. Mitchell never expressed embarrassment toward her family, and, when given the opportunity to pass as white by her father’s side of the
family, she refused and chose to live her life as a proud African American. She rejected any and all prohibitions against her marriage to Will Marion Cook, given her perceived lower-caste status and her mixed-race heritage. Mitchell used her career in the theater and her marriage to Cook to demand respect, and she reconfigured herself as the essence of culture, prepossessed and decorous.

Reminiscent of Abbie Mitchell, Cole and Johnson’s Minnehaha diverged from the stereotype of the debased mixed-race subject by incorporating marriage as a trope of uplift. The musical theater team also discarded the love scene interdiction in plays and the Hampton romance ban and portrayed on stage what was forbidden off stage. Similarly Mitchell dismissed the prohibition that would have prevented her from marrying Cook due to her perceived lower-caste status and her mixed-race heritage.

An integral component to uplift for African Americans included the pursuit of education. Abbie Mitchell believed in the importance of education and made it an integral part of her life. Mitchell fondly recalled that her father encouraged her thirst for learning.

I can even remember his saying so often, learn to love books they will help you in life—will lead you to a knowledge of people—of life and will never disappoint you. Read and remember. I know now he had great hopes for me—he believed I had something to develop. How he loved me!!”

This early exposure to education instilled in Mitchell a love of learning and a desire to better herself. Mercer Cook wrote that his mother attended school up until her sophomore year of high school and relayed that “she studied informally all of her life.” Education for Mitchell worked as a form of racial uplift and legitimized her as dignified, decent, and upright. She took voice and language lessons. This training helped to advance her operatic career and validated her as a professional singer and actress. Abbie Mitchell’s musical career, including The Red Moon, offered her an avenue into middle-class respectability. In 1908 Lester A. Walton, a key proponent of aggrandizing the race, praised Abbie Mitchell for avidly and unremittingly studying her craft. He asserted that because of her studies Mitchell excelled as a “great artist,” singing “high class songs,” and her scholarship propelled her to “the head of [her] respective class.” Her erudition enabled Mitchell to live as the African American quintessence of repute.

Abbie Mitchell’s educational pursuits began informally at the beginning of her career, helped by composers Will Marion Cook and H. T. Burleigh and poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. She maintained that at this juncture in her
life, “[m]y colossal conceit and ignorance stood me in good stead at this, my first audition.” When asked if she knew any music written by black composers, she recalled later, “‘No,’ I replied quite pertly. ‘I’m a nice girl, I only sing classics.’ [Will Marion Cook] laughed and pulled his hat further down over his eyes.” According to Mitchell, her response exposed and reflected her ignorance of the importance and beauty of black music, black literature, and black theater. Her response perhaps mirrored the notion that “nice girls” don’t perform on the stage.

Despite this viewpoint, both Cook and Dunbar imparted knowledge to Mitchell about the beauty of black culture, thus beginning her informal education. In her autobiographical notes, Mitchell detailed Cook’s attempt to educate her at the audition for Clorindy by playing two of his compositions, “Love in a Cottage” and “Dartkown Is Out Tonight.” She recalled that his music affected her profoundly and that she was struck dumb by hearing the brusque Cook’s magnificent music. After his performance she remembered that he chastised her, “‘That’s the kind of music you should sing, that’s Negro music, and you’re ashamed of it!’ I tried to defend myself by explaining that decent, colored girls did not sing coon songs or ragtime, as it was then called. Again he laughed, bitterly.” She noted that it was interesting that fifty years later blacks appreciated the beauty of black art naturally, while she had to be taught.

Mitchell elucidated the importance of this educational encounter concerning the importance, charm, and magnificence of African American music. She suggested that her education regarding black music by Cook remained so significant that she made a conscientious effort to perform black music during her career as a concert singer.

Abbie Mitchell also began informal classes with Paul Laurence Dunbar. According to Mitchell, the inception of her education in poetry began when Dunbar told her Aunt Josephine “he would enjoy teaching me the beauty of Negro poetry and music if she would permit.” [She adds,] “Josephine accepted in confusion, and Paul kept his word, became my teacher for about ten years intermittently.” She greatly respected Dunbar and it appears she treasured her educational experience with him. Mitchell’s quest for education continued even after her daughter’s birth, when she studied with Madame Emilia Serrano.

While performing concerts in 1905, Mitchell studied French and continued lessons in Europe while performing with the New York Syncopated Orchestra. Mitchell exuded culture and grace as a soloist on the operatic stage, a performer of spirituals and Will Marion Cook’s compositions. Her thirst for knowledge led her to mentor others. She opened a music and dramatic school in New York later in her career and taught
Abbie Mitchell personified the definitive lady, urbane, courageous, audacious, brazen, and confident.

Abbie Mitchell used education to elevate her status in U.S. society and found herself aligned with several of the most influential black male creative forces of her time. Comparably, Cole and Johnson’s Minnehaha mirrored Mitchell’s educational life by positioning Minnehaha as a highly educated graduate of Swamptown/ Hampton. The team drew Minnehaha as an educational model for African American women to emulate, which resonated for Mitchell. Her thirst for knowledge and her educational pursuits proved emancipatory and enabled her to rise above society’s assigned position. The character of Minnehaha also worked as an emancipatory force for the audiences about the importance of learning. Finally, Mitchell’s emancipation occurred through her display of her educational achievements on the stage as Minnehaha for all to see and honor.

In August 1908, Mitchell divorced Cook. It was announced that she would appear in The Red Moon. Mercer Cook wrote that “[t]hey offered Mother the role of Minnehaha [and] she accepted. After rehearsing for six weeks, they tried out in Wilmington, Delaware.” Lester Walton noted that the team featured Mitchell prominently in the show. He heralded the fact that this role offered a departure from her previous singing roles because “she has lines galore to speak, and what’s more she speaks them!” When the show opened in September, Mitchell received excellent reviews from Walton, who wrote, “Mitchell lives up to her reputation of possessing an overabundance of personal magnetism and charms her audience whenever she is on the stage.” Mercer Cook remembered seeing the show as a six-year-old and recalled in 1978 that he “still remember[ed] some of Rosamond Johnson’s catchy tunes: ‘On the Road to Monterey,’ ‘Let Me Wrap You in My Big Red Shawl,’ and ‘Bleeding Moon.’” Abbie Mitchell recalled that she “co-starred with Bob Cole and J. Rosamond Johnson,” and remembered The Red Moon as one of “[t]ruly the most spectacular plays to be done by Negroes at that time or any other,” and that “New York yelled ‘thumbs up!’ as did Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago.”

One of the main innovations Cole and Johnson made with Minnehaha was the overcoming of the love scene interdiction. Not only did Minnehaha attract the attention of two amorous suitors, Plunk Green and Red Feather, but she also sang three love songs within the production in the light operatic tradition. Walton wrote that Mitchell sang “As Long as the World Goes Round” in the second act in the “Mitchellesque style.” He recounted that the audience responded positively to her rendition of the song and “she was compelled to respond to several encores before the audience had enough of her
J. Rosamond Johnson wrote the words and music to the highly dramatic song. The song’s introduction reflects a wistfulness and a youthful air “What shall I say, What shall I do? Teach me the way, love to woo you.” It built to a dramatic tension with the chorus “As long as the world goes round constant and true I’ll be round, say you’ll be mine, and love, I’ll be thine, as long as the world goes round.” According to Bob Cole's notes, Johnson and Mitchell sang “Big Red Shawl” in the second act. This was followed by a scene with Cole, the Indian characters, J. Rosamond Johnson, and Abbie Mitchell. After this scene Abbie Mitchell sang “The Pathway of Love, with lyrics by Bob Cole and music by J. Rosamond Johnson.” This song illuminates Cole’s romanticism:

There’s a pathway that leads to a beautiful land, Somewhere, some how,
A pathway that only those few reach the end, who dare! I vow
’Tis a pathway so rough and so rocky, they say
With poor broken hearts strewn along on the way;
Yet new trav’lers will journey this pathway, each day,
They call it the pathway of Love,
The beautiful pathway of love.

This song in some respects conveys Abbie Mitchell’s struggles in life, “a pathway so rough and so rocky, they say,” while also communicating her resiliency and her successful stride down “the beautiful pathway of love.” Through her strength and unbreakable spirit, Abbie Mitchell embodies the very essence of the African American female, majestic, brilliant, charismatic, and refined. Mitchell’s whole public and private persona radiated imperial bearing, with pluck.
Figure 18. *The Red Moon* sheet music. Manuscripts, Archives & Rare Books Division, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.